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The new solidarity?

Snapshots of a post-globalism paradigm

by

Josée Johnston ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology

Edmonton, Alberta

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An epoch is characterized by a complex of ideas, concepts, hopes, doubts, values, and challenges in dialectical interaction with their opposites, striving towards plentitude. The concrete representation of many of these ideas, values, concepts, and hopes, as well as the obstacles which impede the people's full humanization, constitute the themes of that epoch.

-Paulo Freire (1970, 82)

...a new sociocultural paradigm is now in the making, in spite of the fact that no transition beyond capitalism is identifiable for the time being.

-Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1995, 54)

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a dissertation entitled *The new solidarity? Snapshots of a post-globalism paradigm* as an examination of the connections between globalisation, resistance, and social theory submitted by Josée Johnston in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

Neither intended as a comprehensive survey in the tradition of positivist research, nor a utopian thought experiment, the dissertation explores the shape and texture of new solidarities through the intellectual tradition of critical social theory. As such, it dialectically combines theoretical inquiry with empirical research. Case studies provide 'snapshots' of counter-hegemonic modes of living, thinking, and struggling against neo-colonial relations of global capitalism. Characterized by commodification and colonial control, the global capitalist enclosure continues apace. Yet, in its new social topography, challengers emerge on a daily basis.

Chapter One presents globalism as a hegemonic ideology linked to neo-liberal governance – a pattern that mandates the opening of national borders to capital flows, alongside minimal local or state sovereignty and a politics of exclusion. Chapter Two relates globalism's hegemony to how globalisation is studied in the social sciences – as an inevitability – while suggesting more emancipatory methodologies drawn from the writing of Paulo Freire. Chapters Three and Four relate globalism with ecology. It is shown how sustainable development rhetoric is used to subvert more radical challenges to commodification; an alternative paradigm of commons is presented that challenges enclosure, and reasserts the importance of local knowledges and community regulation. Chapters Five and Six examine the shape of the neo-liberal paradigm in relation to democratic challengers in Southern Mexico – the Zapatista Army of National Liberation – and their supporters abroad, while exploring some of the barriers to forming transnational solidarity projects. Finally, Chapter Seven examines the outline of the globalist paradigm in relation to the ideology of consumer sovereignty, cultural cool and the challenge presented by fair-trade projects.

No singular agent – proletariat, conscientious consumer, environmental movement, or indigenous community – will single-handedly engineer a paradigm shift away from the exhaustion of globalised capitalism. Even so, the formation of new solidarities demonstrated in these case provide tools for moving beyond fatalism, and towards more democratic, less violent modes of human existence.

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Unlike my master's thesis, which was written in relative isolation in a poorly lit spare-bedroom, this research evolved in the spirit and practice of communal thought. Many thanks to Gordon Laxer for his unwavering support of my work. Mike Gismondi unknowingly reminded me of important things outside the academic rat race: locality, light-heartedness, and the importance of living a good life. Key aspects of the theoretical framework would not have been possible without the friendship of James Goodman. Various academic friendships have kept me on track, and bolstered my confidence to complete this work. Thanks to Ray Morrow, Janet Conway, Anna Yeatman, Gerardo Otero, Satoshi Ikeda, Chibu Lagman, Jerry Kachur, and Amory Starr – people who may not have realized that their small words of encouragements came at well-timed intervals.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Paradigm shift(s)?

> We can only speculate about the precise configuration of the dawning paradigm. Such speculation is, of course, based on the signals emitted by the crisis of the present paradigm, though they do not determine the outcome.
>
> -Santos (1995, 22)

> In examining class and contemporary principles and arguments professed by the market paradigm's advocates, we find an architectonic structure of covert ethical premises, unseen implications, systemic blind-spots and ruling biases blocked form conscious view. These cognitive blocks of the market paradigm, in turn, have been incorporated into practice, decoupled from connection to their consequences, and rigidified into ruling dogmas that no longer relate to the life-requirements of human or natural beings.
>
> -McMurtry (1998, 293)

☙This dissertation explores the nature of, and possibilities for an emerging paradigm shift away from the ecological and social devastation of global capitalism.[1] While the consequences of this devastation seem evident – loss of species biodiversity, conflicts over scarce resources like water, rising global temperatures, an expansion of violence alongside the rise of gated communities/nations – the shape and character of alternatives has yet to be determined.[2] The fatalist mantra of TINA (there is no alternative) articulated by Thatcher has been soundly rejected by resistance movements throughout the world. The time seems ripe for a consideration of the elements of a paradigmatic alternative to global capitalism, not as an idealist utopian exercise, but rather, as part of a larger cartographic project that sketches the shape of emerging resistance projects. Mapping paradigmatic alternatives has an explicit, and unavoidable normative dimension, but this work also aims to empirically document the politics of the possible. As with all maps, the resulting work is partial. Some areas are included while others concealed, and the perspective of the map inevitably reveals the priorities of the cartographer. Sketching paradigm shifts away from global capitalism requires an atlas, rather than a single map, and this work humbly endeavours to be one piece of a necessarily large, and ambitious research endeavour.

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[1] Because this dissertation is carried out using a format of collected articles (published, and in press), variations from the primary citation style (Turbanian) will occur in several chapters to achieve consistency with the published versions.

The idea of a paradigm shift was popularised with Thomas Kuhn in his landmark work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1996 [1968]). In this book, Kuhn argued that scientists inevitably work within paradigms – constellations of ideas that are partly based on objective facts, and partly based on normative beliefs about what kinds of questions and investigations are both reasonable and interesting. "Normal science" is the science practiced within a dominant paradigm on a daily basis, and a community's paradigms are observed "in its textbooks, lectures, and laboratory exercises" (1996, 43). Over time, a paradigm attains a life of its own, existing beyond the point where it functions as the best means of explaining scientific phenomena. As McMurtry writes, "a learned discipline ceases to be a learned discipline when it rules out rational challenges to its established theoretical paradigm" (1998, 77). Anomalies build up, creating dissent within scientific communities. According to Kuhn, a revolutionary break with the dominant paradigm of "normal science" occurs when "an existing paradigm has ceased to function adequately in the exploration of an aspect of nature to which that paradigm itself had previously led the way. In both political and scientific development the sense of malfunction that can lead to crisis is prerequisite to revolution" (1996 [1962], 92). When this revolution occurs, the old paradigm is replaced with a new mode of explanation, eventually leading to a new "normal science" characterized by new, and "significant shifts in the criteria determining the legitimacy both of problems and of proposed solutions (1996 [1962], 109). Kuhn's insight was to observe that paradigm debates are not adjudicated or resolved by a straight-forward comparison of "facts", but necessarily involve recourse to normative concerns. In Kuhn's words:

---

[2] For an overview of these environmental trends, see the United Nations Environmental Program's recent publication, Global Environmental Outlook Three, which documents

> …since no paradigm ever solves all the problems it defines and since no two paradigms leave all the same problems unsolved, paradigm debates always involve the question: Which problems is it more significant to have solved? Like the issue of competing standards, the question of values can

---

the critical crossroads of humanity's next thirty years on the planet (UNEP 2002).

> be answered only in terms of criteria that lie outside of normal science altogether, and it is that recourse to external criteria that most obviously makes paradigm debates revolutionary (1996 [1962], 110).

As in the natural sciences, the identification of new problems in the social sciences creates a demand for new paradigms. In particular, the increasingly visible symptoms of globalised violence, social suffering and ecological deterioration give rise to demands for new solutions, and even speculation on the notion of a paradigm shift away from global capitalism – an idea that is simultaneously seen as seductive, hopeful, and patently unrealistic. And as in the natural sciences, the idea of a new paradigm of social knowledge poses thorny epistemological problems. It is not always easy to observe sudden shifts in social ideas, particularly in relation to longstanding traditions of modern thought. As Woolpert et al. write in their survey of transformational politics, "it is easier to reach consensus on what is wrong or outdated with the old paradigm than to clearly present the new paradigm, which is only emerging" (1998, xx).

While capitalism has gone through many manifestations and geographical orientations, it has remained the dominant system of organizing social life in the Western hemisphere since the late 18th century, and modernity can be dated back further still.[3] While capitalism may be considered a relatively continuous historical phenomenon, the ideas and practices surrounding it are hardly unified. Kuhn characterized the social sciences as "preparadigmatic", given the absence of a paradigmatic consensus, and the tendency to engage with "every kind of acquired knowledge" (as in Santos 1995, 16).[4] Because the social sciences emphasize the social world of subjective experience, these ideas will not, and cannot behave in precisely the same way as studies within the natural sciences.[5] While ideas do shift in the social sciences and in social life more generally, these transformations do not follow the stereotypical model of scientific paradigms where we adhere to the 'big bang' theory one day, and another competing theory of universal evolution the next.

---

[3] While modernity is usually associated with the age of enlightenment and the rational-industrial worldview, Cheney's idiosyncratic interpretation locates the origins of modern tendencies towards totalization in the human move away from gathering and hunting

The idea of a radical disjuncture in the realm of knowledge – social or 'natural' – can have dangerous consequences, particularly when used to create ideological utopian projects based on dogma and disciplinary adherence. The writings of

---

towards sedentary agriculture (1989, 133). Spatial restrictions prohibit a thorough discussion of the distinction between capitalism and modernity; see Sayer (1991) and Santos (1995) for thoughtful discussion of these debates, and Habermas (1995) and Lyotard (1984) for influential, and competing perspectives.

[4] Kuhn doubted that social scientific studies of social or political systems could become normal science, believing there was insufficient stability to pass on a research tradition from one generation to the next (Bird 2000, 298). At the same time, Kuhn made an extended argument as to why scientific "revolutions" were comparable to revolutions overthrowing political institutions; this suggests that using a common linguistic reference for natural-scientific and social-scientific "paradigmatic shifts" is not far-fetched (see Kuhn 1996 [1962], 92-110).

[5] While there are different methods of data collection and emphases between the natural and the social sciences, it is important to emphasize that the natural sciences contain a necessary subjective dimension, as emphasized by the work of Kuhn. The idea of a fundamental epistemological difference between social and natural scientific thought has been more radically challenged in recent decades of critical theory, particularly in the

Foucault have forever changed how we think about the operation of power and knowledge, alerting us to the dangers of thinking of knowledge in a singular sense, power as a straightforward coercive relationship, or the knowledge/power relationship as straightforwardly libratory (1977). Such insights make it impossible to conceptualise power as being concentrated in a metaphorical kingdom, where the critic stands outside the palace walls shooting arrows at the evil hegemon. Paradigm shifts are often invisible (Kuhn 1996 [1962], 136), and not events that can completely, or radically override an existing paradigm, or way of life. As Tehranian writes:

> New scientific metaphors do not replace, and new theories do not refuse, the old ones but somehow remake them; even scientific revolutions preserve some continuity with the old order of things. This is as true of theoretical speculations about society as it is of the social system itself (1979, 141).

Global capitalism and its associated phenomena – instrumental rationality, consumerism, market-driven lifestyles – are embedded within the hearts and minds of its fiercest critics. Leftist academics drive the latest SUVs; postcolonial critics demand economic growth to meet basic human needs; Marxist feminists sip Starbuck's lattes while flipping through the latest edition of *People* magazine. This insight isn't limited to post-structuralist theorists, but has also been articulated by political ecologist who insist on our inevitable material

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seminal work of Donna Haraway (1989), leading some to the conclusion that "all natural-scientific knowledge is social-scientific" (Santos 1995, 33).

embeddedness in systems of production. Wendell Berry rejects the idea of an environmental crisis as something 'out there' beyond our everyday lives, insisting that this crisis exists "because we have consented to an economy in which by eating, drinking, working, resting, travelling, and enjoying ourselves we are destroying the natural" (2002, 16). The power/knowledge matrix of global capitalist production is deeply implicated in the reproduction of everyday life, and as such, we must vigilantly resist the tendency to underestimate, reify, or externalise its power.

At the same time we resist simplistic models about revolutionary paradigm shifts, we should simultaneously avoid succumbing to a nihilistic position denying change. Resistance to conventional thought processes does occur, as connections are made between thought patterns, various oppressions, and unsustainable ways of life. Susan Griffin explicitly connects these themes:

> The awareness grows that something is terribly wrong with the practices of European culture that have led both to human suffering and environmental disaster. Patterns of destruction which are neither random or accidental have arisen from a consciousness that fragments existence. The problem is philosophical. Not the dry, seemingly irrelevant, obscure or academic subject known by the name of philosophy. But philosophy as a structure of the mind that shapes all our days, all our perceptions. Within this particular culture to which I was born, a European culture transplanted to North America and which has grown into an oddly ephemeral kind of

> giant, an electronic behemoth, busily feeding on the world, the prevailing habit of mind for over two thousand years, is to consider human existence and above all human consciousness and spirit as independent from and above nature, still dominates the public imagination, even now withering the very source of our own sustenance. And although the shape of social systems, or the shape of gender, the fear of homosexuality, the argument for abortion, or what Edward Said calls the hierarchies of race, the prevalence of violence, the idea of technological progress, the problem of failing economies have been understood separately from the ecological issues, they are all part of the same philosophical attitude which presently threatens the survival of life on earth (1995, 29).

One way of defending the need to speak about a paradigm shift away from unsustainable global capitalism is through a defence of centralized juridical, or sovereign notion of power (Santos 1995, 4; Taylor 1986). While power is clearly diffused and disciplinary, embodied in the surveillance of bodies and constituting social subjects, it continues to behave in the classic sense of sovereign power, operating through top-down processes concentrated in powerful bodies like transnational corporations, scientific institutions, legal apparatuses, and states that control the products of the Earth. While the enemy might be 'within us', there are still centres of economic-scientific power that can be identified, challenged and opposed. Local economies can be rebuilt that withdraw from global distribution systems. Alternative norms and desires can be created through a re-enchantment with non-commodified forms of pleasure. As Amory Starr argues in her survey of anti-corporate movements, there is a vibrant grouping of social activism focussed on finding and "naming the enemy" of corporate capitalist structures (2000). These power centres of economic, scientific, and socio-cultural power constitute a pivotal material and symbolic counter-point to a paradigmatic transition away from global capitalism.

Another way of defending a project documenting paradigm shifts is through methodological qualification. While not particularly novel or fashionable, the Weberian notion of an ideal type retains a tremendous utility. The ideal type is not intended as an idiographic description, an ethical ideal, or a scientific hypothesis, but rather, is an unabashedly constructed concept designed to aid description, understanding, and comparison. The thick, ideographic description of historical research is traded for the conceptual clarity provided by ideal types, even though the sociologist continues to "find the material which serves him [sic] as a paradigm in those same real human actions which are relevant from the point of view of the historian" (Weber 1992, 23). The ideal type combines an indefinite number of elements that are found in reality, but not in an ontologically simplistic fashion; we don't expect to find the ideal type photographically replicated in the 'real' world (Weber 1949, 94). The ideal type is neither ontologically crude, nor normatively simplistic. An ideal type inevitably incorporates the subjective meaning systems of actors engaged in their construction, both theoretically and practically, but is not synonymous with a social ideal.[6] Ideal types can be "present in the minds of the persons living in that epoch as an ideal to be striven for in practical life or as a maxim for the regulation of certain social relationships", but in principle, ideals and ideal types are "fundamentally different things" (Weber 1949, 95). As Weber writes, "there are ideal types of brothels as well as of religions" (1949, 99). While the researchers' own normative ideals inevitability shape the construction of ideal types, making explicit one's valuation does not necessitate a theoretical collapse into intuitionism, where all that we can know is our own immediate subjective interpretation of a phenomenon (Weber 1949, 55, 94).

This dissertation will construct paradigmatic models in the sense of ideal types, walking the fine line between subjective and objective approaches to knowledge of the social world. An understanding of global capitalism as a constitutive element of a hegemonic paradigm of commodification and control will be juxtaposed against emerging components of paradigmatic alternatives. Alternatives are also understood in this ideal-type sense, and as such, are focussed around a series of themes intended to aid understanding and comparison, rather than be statistically representative, or comprehensive in the positivist sense. These transitional themes include epistemology (Chapter Two), ecology (Chapters Three and Four), democracy (Chapter Five), solidarity (Chapter Six), and consumerism (Chapter Seven).

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[6] Unlike Weber, my notion of ideal types does not insist on a radical gulf between factual truth and ethical truth. As explored in Chapter Two, the is/ought dualism is seen dialectically, rather than as a either/or choice, or as something that can be readily collapsed.

There are many reasons to suggest that constellations of ideas do change over time, responding to challengers, new problems, and empirical anomalies accumulated within the dominant paradigm, as per the Kuhnian model of scientific revolution. In particular, the legitimacy of a paradigm of global capital development is increasingly challenged for its inability to preserve the biospheric life host on which human life ultimately depends. Forces of "transnational economic globalisation" are not ethically neutral, but arguably serve as "the most destructive and malignant forces of modernism" – "hydra-headed hierarchies gone wild" (O'Sullivan 1999, 2).

The United Nations report on the Environment admits that despite increased attention to environmental degradation since the first UN Environmental Summit in 1972, "sustainable development remains largely theoretical for the majority of the world's population" (2002, 3). The World Bank admits that "globalisation appears to increase poverty and inequality", and the "costs of adjusting to greater openness are borne exclusively by the poor, regardless of how long the adjustment takes" (1999). A CIA sponsored publication, *Global Trends 2015,* reports that "the rising tide of the global economy will create many economic winners, but it will not lift all boats", and it will "spawn conflicts at home and abroad, ensuring an even wider gap between regional winners and losers than exists today" (2001).

Even with traditional positivist research tools, the ability of global capitalism to deliver basic human needs, or stem flows of ecological degradation is discouraging. Income inequality is on the rise within and between countries (UNDP 2000, 34). While development assistance to the world's least developed countries accounted for $11.7 billion in 1998, external debt accounted for $145.6 billion – a debt burden that constituted an astounding 99.5% of the combined GNP of these countries (UNDP 2000, 222). A small number of billionaires control unprecedented levels of wealth, and one-fifth of the world's population is responsible for 90% of the world's total personal consumption. At the same time, 100 million children live and work on the streets, and 14 million children die every year from hunger-related diseases (IFG 2002, 5; UNEP 2002, 11). As theories of climate change become a reality, the destructive relationship between humans and the biosphere yields increasingly dramatic results. The $608 billion lost to natural disasters in the 1990s exceeded that of the four previous decades combined (UNEP 2000, 11). In September 2000 the ozone hole above Antarctica reached an unprecedented size of 28.3 million km2 – an area three times that of the United States (UNEP 2002, 9). A comprehensive study of "ecological overshoot" published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (written by a 'who's who' of ecologists and economists), conservatively calculated that since the 1980s, humans have been taking more resources from the planet than it can replenish; by 2002 humans were using 125% of the earth's potential biological productivity.[7]

As global capitalism fails to produce security for the biosphere or the majority of people living on the planet, legitimacy crises emerge.[8] Such crises are characterized by increasingly violent public-relations battles, as the model's inevitability and 'naturalness' are publicly challenged. These public campaigns were evident earlier in the South, as the debt crisis and structural adjustment policies generated a wave of resistance, particularly as these reforms eliminated non-market access to the means of subsistence (IFG 2001, 14-20). Similar themes have also been taking up in the Northern discourses, particularly since the highly publicized Zapatistas uprising against neo-liberalism in Mexico in 1994, the general strikes in France in 1995, and the brilliant media visuals of the 1999 Battle of Seattle and subsequent anti-globalisation protests.

As a general starting point, we can observe two worldviews coexisting in a discordant fashion: one of top-down corporate-led capital accumulation and commodification, and another of bottom-up initiatives organized around themes of democratic representation and planetary survival. The super-stars of the anti-corporate movement, writing under the auspices of the International Forum on Globalisation, describe two very different worlds: "a corporate globalist world of "power and privilege", and a citizen-based world that is "focused on people and the environment". As these worlds clash we observe a "deepening crisis of such magnitude as to threaten the fabric of civilization and the survival of the species – a world of rapidly growing inequality, erosion of relationships of trust, and failing planetary life support systems" (IFG 2002, 5).

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[7] Alanna Mitchell, 2002, Earth faces supply crisis, study finds, *Globe and Mail*. Tues June 25, 2002. A9.

[8] My examination of legitimacy operates within a general political-economy tradition investigating questions of political representation and consent, rather than referring to the more specific (and state-centric) Habermasian notion of a "legitimation crisis" – the fate of the modern liberal state when it proves unable to manage the multiple competing interests of private capital (Habermas 1975). Spatial restrictions prohibit a thorough exegesis of Habermas' theory of multiple crises in modern societies, arguably one of his central contributions to social theory (Craib 1992, 239). The feasibility of face-to-face discourse as primary mode of creating democratic legitimacy is a particularly thorny

These battles are indicative of larger social struggles to force a paradigm shift away from corporate capitalism, towards more democratic, ecologically sustainable ways of organizing social life on the planet. Of course the language of "paradigm shift" is not the only way of describing shifting ideas constellations. Marxists use the concept of ideology to describe central ideas of structural coercion (Eagleton 1994; Thompson 1990). Foucauldian scholarship popularised the notion of "discourse", a phenomenon that is not reducible to language or speech, but which is part of social processes that make, and remake social sense, constituting subjects along the way (Foucault 1972, 49). While these terms have differing merits, in this work I will retain the language of paradigms, inspired by the work of critical theorist and legal scholar, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1995).

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political issue (see Chambers 1995, 248-250). Issues of communicative action and democracy will be addressed in the Zapatista case study in Chapter Five.

While recognizing the limitations of paradigm concept,[9] it retains the advantage of using a common-sense phraseology that resonates with people's experience and vernacular language use. The need for a paradigm shift echoes the refrain heard from social movements, scholars, and critical voices around the world: to survive, we need *new ways of thinking and living.*[10] What are these new ways of thinking? How do we begin to reorient our everyday lives? These are examples of what Santos calls "elementary questions" – queries that "reach, with the technical transparency of a bicycle, the deepest magma of our individual and collective perplexity" (1995, 11).

---

[9] A paradigm is often roughly understood as a worldview, rooted in Greek etymology implying model, exemplar, or example. In the literature on Kuhn and the history of science, its meaning is both more specific and contested (see Bird 2000, 65-96). Kuhn used the term in different ways – as both a descriptor of consensus within scientific communities, and as an explanation for how scientific theories change within communities when consensus breaks down (Bird 2000, 67-8). This chapter does not attempt to resolve these complex and longstanding debates in the philosophy of science, but will deliberately use the term paradigm in its popular usage, following the example of activists and activist-academics in the social sciences. This usage of paradigm is succinctly defined by Lipietz, as a "world view which permeates a certain era and shapes agreement on a certain way of life in society, on the basis of a particular conception of what is moral and normal and desirable", and which accordingly shapes the ideas and practices of societal development (1992, 11). Ironically, this usage is aligned with what Kuhn believed to be the "most novel and least understood" aspect of his writing – "paradigms-as-exemplars" – that forge a sense of similarity and consensus (Bird 2000, 95).

[10] The notion of paradigm shift is widely cited in political-ecological and globalisation literatures. Daly and Cobb's seminal work on community economics speaks of a paradigm shift away from conventional economics (1994, 5). Drengson identified a shifting paradigm from a technocratic to a "planetary person" (1983), while political-ecologists speak of the need to end the "growth", or "liberal-productivist paradigm" (Ayres 1998; Lipietz 1992, 33). A sub-grouping of political science interested in "transformational politics" also relies on the notion of a paradigm shift to describe movement away from positivism, liberal theory, and unsustainable economic systems (Woolpert et al. 1998). O'Sullivan's work on transformative education calls for a new paradigm which makes a "choice for a sustainable planetary habit of interdependent life forms over and against the dysfunctional calling of the global competitive marketplace" (1992, 2, 8). The point here is not to suggest that such usages of the term "paradigm" are unified, but to note the preference for using this term in the search for a new, and less destructive human-nature metabolism than is currently observed under the capitalist systems associated with modernity.

This question of paradigmatic transition is taken up in earnest by Boaventura de Sousa Santos in his magisterial work of 'postmodern' critical theory, *Toward a new common sense: Law, science and politics in the paradigmatic transition* (1995). Santos is motivated by similar elementary questions which are hung on top of a Rousseauean tradition of questioning the relationship between virtue and science. Here the fundamental question addressed is whether "accumulated scientific knowledge has enriched or, rather, impoverished our lives" (1995, 11). Moral geographer Yi-Fu Tuan puts it in a similar elementary fashion (1989). Despite the undoubted, and obvious progress in science and technology, he asks "has there been moral progress?" (1989, 167). Has the hegemonic paradigm of modernity "exhausted all possibilities of renovation", making it impossible to think clearly or consistently about emancipation within its framework? (Santos 1995, iv).

Santos breaks down the elementary question into more manageable pieces, identifying two dimensions of a paradigm shift – societal and epistemological – that take place at different times and paces (1995). The epistemological transition is the more visible of the two, and takes the form of a transition towards a "*paradigm of a prudent knowledge for a decent life*" (1995, 22, emphasis of author). Unlike the scientific revolution of the 16th century, the current scientific revolution is not a revolution of a purely scientific nature (e.g., a search for prudent knowledge), but is inexorably social (e.g., the search for a paradigm where prudent knowledge is used in the service of attaining a decent life) (ibid.). While the epistemological transition can be observed within the familiar stomping ground of university corridors, the societal transition is a more elusive creature. Santos ambiguously describes a transition from a capitalist paradigm and Westphalian state system, towards a relatively unknown emerging order (1995, ix-x).[11] Santos insists that it is impossible to comprehensively sketch the nature of the societal transition, yet glimpses can be obtained through focussed studies, which he carries out through a study of legal codes that suggest possibilities for a new common sense. Abandoning positivist aspirations towards comprehensiveness, Santos insists that critical theory must strenuously avoid "subparadigmatic" tendencies, continually aspiring to think outside the dominant paradigm of 'normal' social science (1995, x). This requires that we deconstruct and de-familiarize the 'normal science' of modernity, while also thinking about how to reconstruct elements of a new "emancipatory commons sense" (ibid.).

While the transition towards a new emancipatory common sense has many aspects, and Santos can only deal with a few of them in his 614 page treatise, his focus is on law as a code for the societal dimension of the paradigmatic transition. While his empirical focus is quite specific, Santos identifies general dimensions of an emerging common sense that are critical to the emerging paradigmatic transition. Emancipatory common sense is not neutral, or objective in the positivist scientific sense. It is discriminating, favouring the oppressed as the victims of historical colonial processes (Santos 1995, 48). Emancipatory common sense is also not limited to a specific place or landscape. According to Santos, an emancipatory trajectory must spill across the boundaries of six specific and overlapping places: the household place, the workplace, the marketplace, the community place, the citizenplace, and the worldplace (1995, 49).

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[11] While unsatisfying in its ambiguity, Santos' admission can be commended for its honesty. To sketch out glimpses of an emerging societal paradigm is the very task of this dissertation, and therefore cannot be succinctly defined at this point of prolegomenon.

Three dimensions of community experience are also deemed critical to the development of a new emancipatory common sense: a new *ethical common sense* based on the principle of solidarity, a new *political common sense* based on the principle of participation, and a new *aesthetic common sense* based on the goal of re-enchantment (Santos 1995, 46-54). The new ethical common sense is based on a principle of solidarity, and draws on critiques of the hegemonic paradigm of liberal individualism. Once the individual is disembedded from a highly individualistic, Cartesian framework, and re-connected to larger ecological and social systems that the human species are inevitably intertwined with, the human responsibility to know and protect the Other is made manifest.[12] This is an ethics of rights and *responsibilities* – both to the supporting life-host, and to the Other that has historically been subjugated through processes of colonialism and capitalist expansion (1995, 50-51).

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[12] While an ethical consideration of Otherness is rooted in the works of Levinas, my primary referent is to the master-slave dualism central to dialectical thought since Hegel, and brought down to a materialist earth through Marx. Here the Other is not conceptualised as an abstract philosophical entity, but as a process-based notion of intersubjective inequality that constitutes structures of capitalist domination. This allows us to discuss inequality based on myriad subjugations of gender, race, class, abilities, and species. At the same time we strive to understand the formation and stabilization of this inequality through ideologies, it is critical to heed the warnings of post-colonial theorists

The second aspect of the new emancipatory common sense is political, and is centred on a principle of participation. This common sense challenges the restricted arena of formal politics found in traditional democratic theory, and aims to extend the arena of politicisation outside the formal citizenplace, into other arenas of social life like the householdplace, the marketplace, and the community place (Santos 1995, 51-52). The third dimension of the new common sense is aesthetic. While consumer culture offers a commodified response to the pleasure principle that sustains the profit maximization drive of modern capitalism, modern art offers a restricted expression of disenchantment to capitalist commodification and the iron cage of rationalisation sharply criticized by Weber and members of the Frankfurt school. A new aesthetic common sense for Santos must move beyond modern disenchantment, and create a *re-enchanted* relationship to the pleasures of the aesthetic realm, uniting the useful and the beautiful in a way that defies the dominant instrumental rationality of global capitalist culture (1995, 52-54).

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that caution against essentializing the Other as a simple counterpoint to Western philosophical thought (Said 1978; Spivak 1988; Ahmad 1987), or the ubiquitous tendency to translate the Other into one's own terms (Harvey 1999, 118). For further discussion of how understanding the Other operates as a form of knowledge of solidarity, see Chapter Two.

Inspired by Santos' ambitious and provocative suggestions on paradigm shifts, this thesis continues the project of examining ethical, political, and aesthetic dimensions of an emerging emancipatory common sense. Because a societal transition is impossible to comprehensively articulate, this work relies on 'snapshots' of emerging cracks in the armour of contemporary capitalism that further our understanding of where change can occur, and how it is occurring. Such snapshots include the epistemological transition as it relates to globalisation studies and environmental problems, societal transition as it attempts to create a common sense of transborder solidarity and participatory democracy, and an aesthetics of everyday consumption rooted in biospheric limits and human equality. While academics cannot engineer social transitions from on high – such ambition reflects a deep-seated arrogance carried over from colonial eras into neo-colonial globalisation – social scientists can do more than "deconstruct what activists do" (Harvey 1999, 129). As Harvey suggests:

> One of the most intriguing and constructive tasks we academics and activists can jointly undertake is to see where hidden commonalities might lie between ostensibly highly differentiated positions and what translations might be possible. . . In so doing, we may find surprising bases for unlikely alliances for political action (1999, 129-30).

Since a project of paradigm sketches might appear foolishly ambitious at first glance, certain caveats must be stated to qualify the expected results. Firstly, such ambition can be politically justified as per the relevance of asking 'big' questions in an age of pressing ecological and social exhaustion. The individual truth seeker might feel isolated, but is never really alone, since these questions have inspired a long, and noble scholarly tradition of risk-taking and rule breaking. As Frances Moore Lappé wrote in her groundbreaking and influential book, *Diet for a small planet*, "[w]hen you ask big questions, it is impossible to be an 'expert' in everything that you study . . but if you ask a small question – as most narrow academics do – it doesn't matter if you're wrong. Nobody cares." (1991, 54). Asking these types of big questions demands innovative methodological approaches that defy conventional boundaries. Susan Buck-Morss explicitly acknowledges the importance of this type of rule-breaking methodology in her ambitious study of utopia, *Dreamworld and catastrophe* (2000). She writes:

> Discovery of the facts and images entailed constant disregard of accepted disciplinary classifications. "Keywords" were too random and "subject" files too rigid to do the work of research against the grain. The organizing strategies of data banks were inappropriate. The idiosyncratic intuitions of the author provided the search engine (2000, xv).

While asking large questions is politically relevant and with important academic precedent, it seems important to simultaneously avoid the tendency towards the seductions of over-extension. This dissertation is *not* a project that attempts to achieve empirical comprehensiveness over the range of themes addressed. It is *not* a project carried out in a positivist tradition, with the elusive goal of documenting all aspects of an emerging post-globalism, post-capitalist, 'post-modern' paradigm. No such comprehensive work on paradigm transition exists, nor could it exist. As Santos writes, "[s]ince all transitions are both half invisible and half blind, it is impossible to name our current situation accurately" (1995, 1). To attempt such a project would be to continue in the worst traditions of modern metanarrative.

I cannot hope to comprehensively sketch out the nature of an emerging paradigm shift that addresses the social and ecological exhaustion of neo-liberal globalism. Even so, it *is* possible to make suggestions on the shape and texture of ongoing ideological battles over key themes in the formation of a new ethical, political, and aesthetic common sense: solidarity, democracy, consumerism. An appropriate metaphor for this project would be one of a quilt making, particularly when seen as a community quilt-making endeavour. While the seamstress must assume responsibility for piecing together the disparate sections in her area of the quilt, to assume authorship of all aspects of the project would be a form of plagiarism at best, and Occidental arrogance at worst. In a community quilting circle, the quilter does not single-handedly weave the thread, dye or produce the fabric, sew all the squares, or even create the larger quilt's design. Similarly in collective social research, different squares of social struggle and their associated ideas are sewn together with as much analytic skill as the singular author can muster. Even so, the seamstress must necessarily acknowledge the labour and skill of those who contribute pieces to the bigger picture of paradigmatic transition. The vision of one quilter is invaluable, but necessarily partial, human, and imperfect.

Besides this first important caveat on comprehensiveness and partiality, it is important to make a second caveat on the prioritisation of epistemic reflexivity over grand theory production. This type of reflexivity is not the norm in sociological discourse. As Alvin Gouldner wrote in *The coming crisis of western sociology:*

> Sociologists are no more ready than other men [sic] to cast a cold eye on their own doings. No more than others are they ready, willing, or able to tell us what they are really doing and to distinguish this firmly from what they should be doing. Professional courtesy stifles intellectual curiosity; guild interests frown upon the washing of dirty linen in public; the teeth of piety bite the tongue of truth (1970).

Yet self-reflexivity is particularly important (and difficult) when thinking about paradigmatic transitions, since the theorist must inevitably work across two paradigms – the old and the new (Santos 1995, xi). As Kuhn himself emphasized, a new paradigm can reveal things that were previously present, but unseen:

> …during revolutions scientists see new and different things when looking with familiar instruments in places they have looked before. It is rather as if the professional community had been suddenly transported to another planet where familiar objects are seen in a different light and are joined by familiar ones as well (1996 [1968], 111).

Developing new paradigmatic insights therefore demands that we rethink and unearth deeply embedded, and invisible assumptions – particularly anthropocentric assumptions that have structured Western philosophical thought since Artistotle. Yet it is not always clear how to proceed in this task. It is insufficient to simply add an 'eco' prefix on to our social-scientific research fields, and then carry on as before (Boff 2000, 12). In her review of sustainability literature in sociology (1992), Eichler contends that rather than search for a new metatheory to explain human-nature metabolism, our intellectual projects should unearth the background assumptions of anthropocentrism that underpin contemporary sociological theories – the 'normal science' of sociology.

This type of 'unearthing' work is critical for sociology, and social theory more generally. This project should not be limited to unearthing background anthropocentrism, but should more generally problematize our relationship to the many forms of the Other under globalised capitalism. The imperative for intellectual self-reflexivity as a form of knowledge creation is echoed by various scholastic traditions and activist communities, and takes many different names. Liberation theologian Leonardo Boff speaks of the need for a "strict form of self-criticism" (2000, 12), while "transformational politics" prioritises a shift away from instrumental rationality and towards self-actualisation as political praxis (Daryl Slaton 1998, 13). Critical geographer Yi-Fu Tuan speaks of human beings as "the most plastic and perhaps the only *self-critical part of nature*" (1989, 160, emphasis mine). Jesuit scholar, Anthony de Mello writes that "the only way someone can be of help to you is in challenging your ideas" (1990, 35). Pierre Bourdieu referred to this imperative as the need for "epistemic reflexivity" (1992), and E.P. Thompson famously declared, "it is only by facing into opposition that I have been able to define my ideas".

Despite the various labels employed, the imperative remains remarkably similar across multiple traditions: to rigorously investigate the unspoken assumptions in our research and writing. This involves investigating both what is said, and what is *not* said in our social theories and sociological explanations. Besides examining the research that exists, we must also investigate what normative questions are *not* being asked, and what empirical phenomena are *not* seen as worthy of investigation within the dominant paradigm. How do social scientists unwittingly perpetuate the inequalities of capitalist modernities, and its attending ideologies of developmentalism, consumerism, ethnocentrism, and anthropocentrism? While Foucault remained pessimistic about the possibilities of an emancipatory knowledge, he provided one of the most convincing accounts of why intellectuals must continually unearth their own participation in power/knowledge frameworks:

> The work of the intellectual is not to form a political will of others; it is, through the analysis he does in his own domains [sic], to bring assumptions and things taken for granted again into question, to shake habits, ways of acting and thinking, to dispel the familiarity of the accepted, to take the measure of rules and institutions and, starting from

> that re-problematization to take part in the formation of a political will (2000, xxxiv).

I. Outlining paradigm shifts: an overview

☙ Given these caveats on comprehensiveness and the stated focus on epistemic reflexivity, it is now possible to outline the shape of things to come. What particular ideas am I interested in exploring? What paradigm shifts are observable, and what dimensions of a new emancipatory common sense will be my focus?

In the remaining part of this introductory chapter, I will further outline the shape of a dominant paradigm worldwide: neo-liberal globalism. This will serve to establish a hegemonic counterpoint for the remaining part of the dissertation, and establish a neo-Gramscian analytic that will be employed throughout the chapters.[13]

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[13] Gramsci's own writings, along with many other Marxist perspectives, emerged from an unabashedly anthropocentric, productivist perspective – an inevitable product of the time frame of much of these writings. For an ecocentric critique of Marxist theories (orthodox and humanist) see Eckersley (1992, 75-95). While undermining anthropocentrism embedded in social theory is critical, a neo-Gramscian analytic can be employed that identifies possibilities for an ecocentric counter-hegemony (just as feminist writers have long drawn from misogynistic scholarship). Adkin, for example, uses a post-structural reading of Gramsci to argue that a "counter-hegemonic ecological discourse must be articulated to real experiences of deprivation and alienation, but without homogenizing such experiences" (1998, 296)

In Chapter Two, I take up the issue of epistemic reflexivity and the possibilities of a epistemological paradigmatic shift from 'knowledge-as-regulation', towards a vision of 'knowledge-as emancipation' based on dialogue. This will occur through an examination of the methodology used in the study of globalisation. Drawing on the writings of Paulo Freire, I contrast a monological 'banking' mode of data collection with a Freirean dialogical process. Through this interactive process, the globalisation researcher engages in dialogue with those engaged in struggles against neo-liberal globalism. This occurs not as an act of charity, but based on the belief that a theory/practice dialogue is both an epistemological necessity, and the ultimate aim of social theory. This sets a standard for theory/practice exchange in the remaining chapters, where I address the question of a societal paradigm shift towards a new emancipatory common sense.

Chapter Three and Four are focussed on the possibilities for a transition away from the ecological destruction of global capitalism. I examine the possibilities of an emerging ethical common sense centred around solidarity between human communities and non-human species, as well as a political common sense that re-politicises questions of development and consumption. What are the possibilities for co-existence in an ecosphere with discernable limits? This question is addressed through a juxtaposition of the logic of sustainable development, with an emerging paradigm centred around "the commons". This shift contests the long-run un-viability of perpetual commodification and capitalist expansion, and suggests a contrary logic, or common sense, geared to maximizing subsistence for a number of species. After sketching the shape of an emerging ecological breakdown, I argue that ecological degradation is inextricably linked to capitalist crises, and its perpetuation of anthropocentric growth models, depoliticized notions of development, and the ubiquitous ideology of consumerism. While the language of the commons has been readily coopted in the interests of averting short-run crises in profitability, it retains the possibility of resuscitating a communal common sense based on an ethical responsibility to humanity's life-host, and reciprocal relations with distant human and non-human Others. This exists both as a normative potential, and an empirical reality within new forms of social activism organized against ecological exhaustion.

Chapter Five addresses the important issue of democracy in a paradigm shift. In particular, I examine the formation of a new political common sense based on ideals of politicisation and participation. How do we move beyond the limited realm of minimalist electoral democracy that accompanies neo-liberal globalism? The issues here involve a tension, and potential transition from a 'thin' minimalist vision of democracy, toward a 'thicker' substantive version that attempts to break democracy out of the formal citizenplace, and into the realms of the marketplace, householdplace, and communityplace. While democratic theorists have long theorized the need for a more substantive democratic vision, the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas provides a living example of how this common sense emerges through resistance to the anti-democratic tendencies of 'white-washed' formalistic democracy, that bolsters the economic inequity of neo-liberal globalist policies.

Chapter Six examines the possibilities of an emerging common sense of social solidarity that exists in the liminal space between parochial local communities, and cosmopolitan universalism. This occurs through an analysis of the transnational solidarity network that has emerged around the Zapatista struggle in Chiapas, Mexico. This case study suggests that traditional models of solidarity are relatively unproblematized, and construct a false dichotomy between localism and cosmopolitanism. The case of Zapatismo solidarity suggests the potential for an emerging solidarity rooted in a *politics of scale*, and points towards the importance of understanding how transnational inequalities undermine transnational solidarity projects. How well can we 'know' the Other when we are trapped in structural relations of power and privilege vis à vis other beings and communities? I put forward suggestions on both the strengths, and limitations of these emerging solidarity forms and the incipient transnational master frame contesting neo-liberal globalism. This exposes the contradictions of a transition from unproblematized universalism towards a more nuanced solidarity of scale that is conscious of inequality, and strives to towards the elimination of power imbalances with distant others in the global economy.

Chapter Seven maps possibilities for an emancipatory common sense of solidarity and aesthetics applied to consumption. I examine the case of fair-trade, and explore the contradictions involved in using consumer-based strategies of resistance. These strategies strive for solidarity based on material and cultural equity with the Other, hoping to displace the severe inequities between the minority and majority world. A study of fair-trade reveals, however, that these strategies offer minimal redistribution in the scale of global capitalism's massive inequalities, fail to subvert the dominant consumer sovereignty thesis that affords ultimate power to the individual consumer, and may work to obscure the persistence of inequality and exploitation across species, time, and space. While fair-trade strategies suffer from serious limitations, they contain seeds of an emancipatory common sense based on the goal of restricting market regulation over social life, and maximizing moral-practical rationality and regulatory principles of reciprocity. While fair-trade is an imperfect and impartial strategy, it draws attention to the destructiveness of market-based regulation and instrumental rationality, identifying cracks in the armour by positing fair-trade as a more socially just mode of regulation. The fair-trade strategy should not be seen in isolation, but as connected to other consumer strategies (e.g. voluntary simplicity, local exchange trading systems) that attempt to re-define the notion of the good life based on a rejection of instrumental rationality, and re-enchanted notion of personal pleasure that defies the dominant vision of aesthetic betterment through commodification.

It is worth noting that the challenge of examining large scale phenomena such as paradigmatic shifts demands an innovate approach. Perhaps this is why artists like Diego Rivera had to paint murals rather than thumbnail sketches – he needed a large space in which to fit the terror of the working class, the seductions of wealth and privilege, the glorious ambition of Communist leadership. Non-fiction academic works cannot hope to achieve Rivera's expressiveness, but they can be driven by his passion, inspiring innovative social research that defies traditional boundaries of acceptable questions and methodological strategies. By putting together snapshots of different paradigmatic challenges, drawing both on social theory and examples from social movements, the elusive shape of a post-globalism world can take on more flesh. The folly of such an ambitious attempt is obvious, but its defence lies in a long-tradition of 'big-question' research that inspires others by taking risks – not just in the course of one article, or one dissertation, but over a lifetime of theory and practice.

II. Neo-liberal globalism and its discontents

☙ A common tendency on both the left and the right is to depict globalisation in monolithic terms. For free-marketers, globalisation represents a welcome historical inevitability of unfettered capitalism. For the left, globalisation is more like an evil empire, floating up in space like the 'Death Star'. In the words of Barry Lynn, former executive director of *Global Business* magazine:

> Globalisation is many things, and much has been written about it and said. But throw all the tomes and studies and placards into a giant try-works, and you'll render two simple arguments: 1) Globalisation is good because it spreads what is good in America, such as a liberal approach to business, and McDonald's. 2) Globalisation is bad because it spreads what is worst about America, such as a liberal approach to business, and McDonald's (2002, 34).

As one of the most frequently heard buzzwords in contemporary lexicon, the term globalisation begs for elaboration and specification. It demands a framework that resists monolithic analysis, and remains sensitive to both continuity and change, scuttling the tendency towards hyperbole ("everything has changed") and recalcitrant traditionalism ("nothing has changed"). My goal here is not to provide an overview of the globalisation literature, but to give a broad sense of what globalisation means for a discussion of paradigmatic shifts.[14] What do we mean by concepts of globalisation and globalism, and most importantly, how do these conditions constitute a shifted terrain on which struggles for social change take place? What actors demand a post-globalism paradigm, and what contradictions seem likely to push this agenda forward?

A good starting point is Water's definition of globalisation: "a social process in which the constraints of geography and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding" (1995, 3). Globalisation in this general sense is understood as a social process that involves the "widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness" (Held et al. 1999, 140). Held et al. usefully term this the "spatio-temporal" dimension of globalisation, which they depict as a multidimensional process that can be evaluated along four axes: extensity (stretching across frontiers), intensity (the magnitude and frequency of interconnectedness), velocity (the speed at which this exchanges take place), and impact (measured through a consideration of decisional, institutional, distributive, and structural factors) (1999, 14-21). While the "hyperglobalisation" school tends to overstate the extent to which global integration occurs along these lines, a competing camp of "sceptics" often reverts to a version of 'nothing has changed' (Held et al. 1999, 3-7). A more reasonable "transformationalist" middle ground allows us to see globalisation as a process that is both continuous, and discontinuous. This acknowledges previous modes of global connectedness (particularly the extensive global connections of Western imperialism), while pinpointing how contemporary flows and networks represent a novel combination of extensity, intensity, velocity, and impact (Held et al. 1999, 7-10; Castells 1996). From here it does not follow that a global society, or civil society now exists, but rather, that there is an intensified level of connections across regions and continents that is neither entirely novel, nor simply a replica of past history.[15]

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[14] For a balanced, general accounting of the globalisation literature see Waters (1995). See Hoogvelt (1997) for analysis relating globalisation to the developing world, and Held et al. (1999) for a portrayal of globalisation in advanced capitalist societies. While helpful aids, these accounts are by no means comprehensive. Held et al. note that "despite a vast and expanding literature, there is, somewhat surprisingly, no cogent theory of globalisation nor even a systematic analysis of its primary features" (1999, 1).

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[15] In the analytic framework developed by Held et al., the authors are clear to insist that globalisation should not be *a priori* defined in opposition to processes of localization, regionalisation, nationalization, or internationalisation, but should instead be understood as involving a dynamic relationship which can only be fully understood through empirical studies. In their words: "globalisation is not conceived here in opposition to more spatially delimited processes but, on the contrary, as standing in a complex and dynamic relationship with them" (1999, 15-16). What is critical for an understanding of globalisation is the criterion of genuinely expansive spatial connections, without which, the term becomes unwarranted (ibid.).

Although by definition, globalisation involves a process of transformation across vast areas of geographic space, these connections are not reified events happening 'out there', a sort of stratospheric globalisation phenomenon. Although it seems paradoxical, globalisation inevitably involves local transformations.[16] Recognizing this dynamic, Giddens describes globalisation as:

> . . . the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an obverse direction from the very distanciated relations that shape them. Local transformation is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space (1990, 64).

This dialectical focus moves us away from seeing globalisation as a 'thing' or 'condition', and instead insists on unpacking globalisation as a long-term series of processes. This is not a uniform process, but involves complex local formations interacting with other localities, nations, states, regions, transnational public spheres, and transnational capital. Of course, not all of these forces possess equal degrees of power. A common analytic tendency is to revert to a sugar-coated liberal vision of levelled playing fields and powerful e-mail protestors. In this view, the structural power of capital is an anachronistic fiction, and global civil society is an empirical reality rather than a normative ideal. This is not the time to abandon structural analyses of capitalism. At the same time, we must also observe historical specificity and the dialectical relationship between different scales of struggle (e.g., the local, the national, the regional). While it is ludicrous to proclaim that liberal capitalism has delivered 'the end of history', it is equally facile to assume that globalisation represents an undifferentiated process of monolithic oppressors imposing themselves around the world on faceless, uniform victims.

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[16] The importance (and limits) of the local will be further outlined in Chapter Four in the

While the spatio-temporal dimension is a constitutive element of globalisation and a useful point of orientation, this serves more as an analytic starting point than a finished piece of argumentation. In particular, we need to be much more specific about how globalisation relates to local, national and global forms of production. How is globalisation related to *global capitalism*? To get away from monolithic characterizations, I identify three key characteristics that are central to an understanding globalised capitalism: 1) new modes of capital accumulation and regulation; 2) structural irrelevance and a politics of exclusion; 3) formation of solidarity in response to social exclusion of accumulation processes. These points are not intended as a last word on multi-faceted globalisation debates, but will elucidate broad features, contradictory pressures and a political-economic context underlying the paradigmatic shifts discussed in following chapters.

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section entitled, "Commons beyond the local?".

i. The emergence of globalism

☙ Under processes of globalisation, the speed of life under capitalism has accelerated, as spatial barriers are increasingly overcome in the capital accumulation process (Harvey 1990, 240; Ikegami 1999). The time-space compression facilitated by new technologies has changed the face of capital accumulation and regulation (Harvey 1990). This increasing speed and geographical integration makes globalised capitalism both continuous, and distinct from previous manifestations.

We can begin by outlining discontinuities. Globalisation is often equated with the *expansion* of capitalism through increasing geographic regions, yet this is a process that has been occurring since the beginning of the market system.[17] Globalised capitalism overlaps with, but is also not identical to *internationalization*, a trend characterized by increasing interaction between national economies through international trade and investment which both foreshadowed, and accompanied globalisation (Hoogvelt 1997, 114). Globalised capitalism is related to, but also not synonymous with *transnational capitalism*, a phenomenon characterized by the organisation of cross-border production by multinational corporations that both preceded, and facilitated globalisation (ibid.).

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[17] Karl Marx described the voracious appetites of "constantly expanding markets" which "chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe", and which "must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere (1977, 224). Hirst and Thomas use historical evidence to analyse the contemporary integration of the global economy (measured through trade flows, investment, etc.), and find that current levels are not unprecedented in a world historical context (1996).

Although these different phenomena are intricately linked, a particular form of capital accumulation distinguishes globalised capitalism. Linked to the spatio-temporal dimension of globalisation, globalised capital accumulation possesses a particular intensity that is made possible by time-space compression and the creation of geographically dispersed, yet simultaneous phenomenal worlds. What makes contemporary globalised capitalism unique is not that it operates in distant locales, but *how* it operates at a distance – the intensity, rather than the extensity of distant interactions. The capitalist mode of production has always been trying to overcome the limits of time and space, but new infrastructure of information/communication technologies permitted an unprecedented compression of space and time across geographical regions, and contracted the time-horizon of decision-making (Castells 1996, 92-93). The intensity and simultaneity of these global interactions can be observed through the presence of a global market discipline across multiple sectors, the development of flexible systems of production and distribution, and an increasingly reliance on financial transactions for profit-making (Hoogvelt 1997, 122-131).[18]

These qualities of globalised capitalism become clearer when one considers financial markets – the quintessential example (and primary engine) of this spatio-temporal compression. Capital is now managed around the clock in globally integrated financial markets working in real time for the first time in history. A common, simultaneously experienced phenomenal world has facilitated the unprecedented dominance of financial capital operating through global capital markets using high-speed, long-distance transactions. Global capital accumulation is distinguished by a tremendous growth in financial transactions, which far exceeds the growth of any of the underlying economic fundamentals, such as trade, investment, and output. Korten describes this as a "tendency of an unrestrained market to reorient itself away from the efficient *production* of wealth to the *extraction* and *concentration* of wealth." (1995, 186, emphasis of author). Financial markets enjoy a "degree of autonomy from 'real production' unmatched in the annals of political economy" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, 10).[19]

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[18] Global capital accumulation is *not* characterized by the equal inclusion of different geographic sectors from around the world, as will be explored below. Regionalization

With globalised capitalism, wealth creation has become un-hinged from the production of goods, and 'super-profits' are earned through multiple high-speed financial manipulation. Peter Drucker has estimated that as many as 90% of transnational financial transactions are unrelated to the 'real' economy (as in Hoogvelt 1997, 128). For every $1 dollar circulating in the productive world economy, $20 to $50 circulate in the economy of pure finance (Korten 1995,189). More than any other time in human history, the profits of financial capital are based on what is called "fictitious capital formation". Capital creates capital based on debt, exponential debt creation, currency speculation, and a complex trade in futures and

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and structural inequality are still central features of the globalised mode of capital accumulation.

[19] This is not to say that financial capital ever enjoys complete independence from factors of production, or biophysical capital. As Comaroff and Comaroff write, "crisis after crisis

derivatives, while the role of productive investment becomes secondary to profit-making (Hoogvelt 1997, 81).[20] As Fidel Castro succinctly remarked, "the world has become a huge casino" (as in Comaroff & Comaroff 2001, 7; see also Strange 1986).[21] The dominance of financial capital is not just a phenomenon noted by left-wing critics. Critics (and supporters) are openly detected in the business section of the daily papers. One *Globe & Mail* commentary made the astounding discovery that "the interests of Wall Street and Bay Street are not inextricably tied to those of Main Street", and continued by asking, in light of post September 11th stock market upheaval and the accounting scandals at Enron and Worldcom:

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in the global economy, and growing income disparities on a planetary scale, make it painfully plain that there is not such thing as capitalism sans production" (2001, 7).

[20] While globalism is characterized by a "decontextualization", where capital and its workforce exist in an increasingly remote relationship from each other, the mobility of global capital does not mean that place or production have become irrelevant (Sassen 1998; Comaroff & Comaroff 2001, 7, 13; Moore 2001/2, 479-81). The rattling of stock markets in 1999 when an earthquake hit Taiwan – a place where nearly all of the world's scanners and motherboards are produced in a single industrial park – served as one reminder on this point, leading Lynn to argue that the global industrial supply chains of multinationals serve as a lightening rod for future implosion in the U.S. economy (Lynn 2002, 36). In his words, "[w]e now live in a world where a single earthquake, or terrorist attack, or embargo, could in a moment bring our economy to a halt and, if played right by some smart state, might well threaten the very fundamentals of our [U.S.] wealth and power." (2002, 34). While place-based production remains important, control over mobility is highly differentiated according to class positioning in the global economy (Hoogvelt 1997, 145-6; Massey 1991).

[21] Comaroff and Comaroff relate the rise of financial capital to the global proliferation of what they term the "occult economy" (2001). Characterized by the "allure of accruing wealth from nothing", the occult economy is visible in diverse phenomena such as the intensification of Ponzi and pyramid schemes, the worldwide obsession with lotteries, an increasing tolerance of gambling as a legitimate means of acquiring wealth, and prosperity gospels such as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (2001, 19-27). Animated by the same spirit that drives casino capitalism, the occult economy represents "casino capitalism for those who lack the fiscal or cultural capital …to gamble on more conventional markets" (2001, 22-23).

> …what has happened out there (here?) in the *real economy*, where people work for a living (if they can find a job) and spend or save their earnings (if they have any) and try to get by without the hourly histrionics of delight and despair that occupy those in the world of finance?[22]

To understand what has happened 'out there' in the 'real economy', we might begin by remembering that an autonomous invisible hand does not independently drive this globalised mode of capital accumulation. Rejecting a teleological, and economistic view of history requires an explanation of how particular packages of norms, beliefs, policies, and myriad levels of governance work to support particular capital accumulation regimes. Changes in patterns of capital accumulation develop alongside changes in the *mode of capital regulation*, understood as a "body of interiorized rules and social processes" which take the form of "norms, habits, laws, regulating networks" (Lipietz, 1986, 19).[23] Technological or economic factors alone cannot explain the tendency of national states to deregulate their financial sectors and open the door to private international capital, particularly in countries like Mexico with fierce nationalist traditions. A globalist mode of regulation works through international norms, laws, beliefs, and institutions to support the free, and rapid movement of capital and goods across time, space, and national borders, relatively unencumbered by the demands of national citizenry. Other symptoms of globalism include an outward orientation of national state structures, an "unembedded liberalism", the widespread regulation of "deregulation", an unbridled faith in free trade, and the presentation of liberal productivism as a categorical imperative (Hoogvelt 1997, 136; Lacher 1999; Lipietz 1992, 31-33). As numerous commentators have noted, globalism operates as an ideology that obscures the nature of social choice, and uses a frustratingly circular logic. As Lipietz writes:

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[22] Bruce Little, "Real economy's fortune isn't tied to the Street," *Globe & Mail,* Thursday, July 4, 2002. B11.

[23] While there are other ways of conceptualising global capitalist development, the benefits of the regulation school's approach is its avoidance of economic determinism, insistence on historical and social contingency, and appreciation of the mutability of capitalist structures. See Jessop (1990) for an overview. By emphasizing contingency, however, it becomes difficult to definitively state what elements constitute the emerging mode of regulation, since the post-Fordist "liberal-productivist" regime of capital accumulation is still in formation, characterized by inequality, crises of demand, economic instability, and ecological crises (Lipietz 1992, 35-47). The question of how to effectively regulate this regime of accumulation remains open. According to Hoogvelt, "the methodological problem with the Regulation School's approach is that it is doomed to have merit only in hindsight, as an explanatory theory after the fact" (1997, 132). This makes it important to acknowledge the provisional nature of our discussion of the

> To the question 'Why do we really need free trade and free enterprise?', the answer is 'To modernize the productive system', and to the question 'Why modernize the productive system?', the rely is 'To cope with international competition'. In other words, an unequivocal return to what in the past was unspoken: 'Accumulate, accumulate, that is the Law of the prophets.' . . .There is no longer a need for higher justification of a political or moral nature' (1992, 32).

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contemporary mode of regulation – a methodological issue similar to earlier discussions of paradigm shifts.

The term globalism is used to refer to this ongoing mode of capital regulation, and will be meant to imply *neo-liberal globalism.*[24] Neo-liberal policies have become economic orthodoxy on ideological and institutional levels throughout the world.[25] With the debt crisis in the early 1980s, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) emerged as an international gatekeeper preventing national default and a global financial meltdown, and co-ordinating the global shift towards neo-liberal policies. Although the obligations of globalism were mandated during the neoliberal policies of the debt crises of the 1980s, they are now often locked in by regional agreements like NAFTA and membership in international institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO). Neoliberal policies are similar to Reaganomics in the United States (e.g. high interest rates, priority given to the financial sector to the detriment of productive sectors, tax cuts to benefit private investment) except that instead of running huge fiscal and current account deficits, most countries have been forced to accept the extreme fiscal discipline demanded by international financial institutions (IFIs) (Vilas 1994, 267-8).[26]

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[24] I use the term *globalisation* as an overarching referent. It is used to include spatio-temporal processes, new modes of capital accumulation, as well as the accompanying mode of regulation (*globalism*) characterized by neoliberal policies and the peripheralization of large regions.

[25] The current hegemony of neo-liberal policies should not be taken to imply that they will always define the globalist mode of regulation. Mann suggests that they are already in decline amongst the Washington consensus, as evidenced in a growing number of dissenting voices at the World Bank, and epitomized by certain East Asian states' insistence on regulating short term capital flows (2001/2, 467). For a discussion of dissent within the "Washington consensus", and the prospects for a post-Washington consensus, see Robinson & Harris (2000)

[26] The U.S. current account deficit is currently estimated at 4.3% of gross domestic product – a level broadly considered unsustainable. This requires a net inflow of $1.2 billion a day in foreign funds to maintain the value of the U.S. dollar, a particularly hefty sum given capital flight responding to revelations of corporate malfeasance. Drew Fagan,

Although globalism never achieved the strong popular support of Keynesianism in the post-war period, it has been backed up by a powerful group of enforcing officers often referred to as the *G-7 nexus*, a grouping that includes IFIs, transnational firms, private bond-rating agencies, and key statesman in core nation states. Through the rapid movement of capital out of government bonds, bills, and currencies, financial capital is able to discipline governments easily, and on relatively short notice so that direct behavioural arm-twisting becomes relatively unnecessary.[27]

Facing these pressures, states become less oriented to managing internal democratic demands or maintaining the national consumption standards required of Keynesian economics, and more oriented towards adjusting the national economy to meet the categorical imperative of competitive participation in a global economy.[28] In the past two decades, states have become deeply involved in

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"It's sad by true: the American economic eagle is landing", *Globe & Mail*, Thursday, July 4, 2002, B11.

[27] Gill terms this phenomena *disciplinary neoliberalism*, drawing on Foucault's work to capture the way power operates on capillary, covert levels in the global political economy. Disciplinary liberalism refers to a type of discipline that combines the structural power of financial capital with capillary power and panopticism (1995b, 401). The ideas of neoliberalism are enforced by the structural power of transnational financial capital, but they also operate at a disciplinary micro level where they are intertwined with ideas of knowledge, bureaucratic legitimacy, and appropriate public policy (Gill 1995). Mobile financial capital has not only gained the structural power provided by a competitive market-place, but possesses a normative power engendered by the widely-accepted consensus that the free movement of capital and private property are essential to growth of gross national product, the penultimate national aspiration (*ibid*).

[28] Here is useful to pre-empt certain objections (and circumvent stock debates) by noting that the term neoliberal globalism does *not* imply that the power of states is finished, obliterated, or terminated by the end of history or transnational capital forces. While neoliberal policies have constrained the autonomy of numerous states in the global

the process of institutionalising neoliberal globalism. The *new constitutionalism* refers to the reorganization of a nation's legal and constitutional practices in order to create special rights for corporate citizens, at the same time it undermines the state's accountability to citizens and the public sphere (Gill 1995b, 412). With this reorganization, the public sphere is privatised and commodified, while the nation's economic goals are redefined according to the agenda of globalism: free trade, open markets, capital mobility, and greater accumulation.

ii. Structural irrelevance and the politics of exclusion

☙ Although the structural power of mobile international capital serves as a powerful disciplinary force, the globalist mode of regulation is not seamless. Systemic contradictions emerge which create the basis for active resistance against the social polarization of this mode of accumulation. This second feature of globalised capitalism concerns the marginalizing effects of new modes of capital accumulation and regulation, what Hoogvelt terms "the politics of exclusion" (1997, 147).[29]

It has been widely noted that the traditional model of first/second/third world is insufficient. The 'third world' represents a disparate assortment of nations which

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system to independently carry out policy, particularly marginalized peripheral states, they have also made certain states more powerful (e.g. the U.S.), strengthened certain state sectors more than others, and rely on the legal and institutional frameworks provided by states. This issue of state capacity and sovereignty is a complex one, and must be explored empirically to avoid facile pronouncements on the 'end of the nation state'.

don't necessarily share common traits, the 'second world' of state socialism has collapsed, while the 'first world' has revealed its own problems of homelessness, poverty and social exclusion. Yet at the same time the old markers lose credibility, asymmetry in the global system prevails.[30] The globalized economy is by no means a planetary economy based on equitable capital flows and even patterns of accumulation.[31] Although the global economy possesses a "capacity to work as a unity in real time on a planetary scale", thanks to advances in information technology (Castells 1996, 92), this capacity has not lead to a systematic, equitable incorporation of the world's regions and populations into the global economic system. The current global transformation reduces large areas of the world to structural irrelevance, or what has also been termed the "fourth world" – a form of social exclusion that cuts across geographic boundaries, and creates a permanent

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[29] This marginalization phenomenon goes by other names, such as social apartheid, or the fourth world. See for example, the articulation of social apartheid by Brazilian theologian Jung Mo Soon (2000).

[30] The gap between the richest and poorest fifth of the world's population jumped from 30 to 1 in 1960, to an astonishing 78 to 1 in 1998 (UNDP 1999). The net worth of the world's 200 richest people grew from $40 billion to more than $1 trillion from 1994 to 1998 (ibid.). Three individuals control assets that are greater than the combined GNP of the 48 least developed countries, while the combined income of 475 billionaires was worth more than the incomes of 50% of the world's peoples in 1999 (ibid.). Growing global inequality is also observed intra-regionally and within states. During the 1980s, for example, Latin America produced poor people at twice the rate of population growth (Vilas 1994, 271-2). By 1994 Mexico was home to 24 billionaires who controlled wealth equal to that of the poorest 24 million Mexicans (Vilas 1994, 72; Botz 1995, 119).

[31] Even with all the differentiation of the global economy, it would be highly misleading to deny the existence of a core of powerful players that hold much of the world's technical capabilities, financial capital, and industrial power. Countries in the "developed world" account for 16% of the world's population, 85% of world output, 80% of direct foreign investment, 80% of the world's trade, and on average, have a GDP which is 56 times greater than that of "low income" countries (Vilas 1994, 258). Trade and capital linkages are concentrated between the three core centres of Europe, Asia, and North

class of people marginalized from participation in the global economic system (Castells 1998; Hoogvelt 1997, 66,162; Cardoso 1993). This is often described as an "hourglass society", or tiered society, where a large, permanent class of workers endures the devastation of structural unemployment and rescinding of the welfare state support system (Lipietz 1993, 35; Hoogvelt 1997, 147). While the politics of exclusion employs a similar logic across 'developed' and 'developing' nations, what varies is the size of the excluded tier, the financial ability of the state to mollify the fears of the squeezed middle sectors, and the degree of incorporation into the global production system (Hoogvelt 1997, 147-8). At the same time regions like Southern China experience "one of the largest waves of industrialization in history":

> . . . some rural regions in China, India, and Latin America, entire countries around the world, and large segments of the population everywhere are becoming irrelevant (*from the perspective of dominant economic interests)* in the new pattern of international division of labour, and thus they are being socially excluded (Castells 1996, 113).

Compared to post-war Keynesianism, globalism appears even less capable of incorporating mass populations in its development wake, particularly since global inequalities in wealth remain obscene (Moore 2001/2, 482; Arrighi 2001/2).[32]

America, while "the rest of the world becomes organized in a hierarchical and asymmetrically interdependent web" (Castells 1996a, 108).

[32] While global elites find it easier to participate in a common financial market, the majority of the world's population is excluded from capital flows. This trend will likely continue, since it is "very unlikely that money will flow more easily from where it is concentrated and politically and strategically safe, to where it is scarce and subject to great political and strategic risks" (Hoogvelt 1997, 83). The chairman of Citicorp admits

Even in core countries it has proven impossible to achieve hegemony around neo-liberal policy lines.[33] Growing income inequality rubs up against the promise of increased prosperity embedded in trade agreements. In peripheral nations, where the contradictions of globalism are more acute, resistance has brought waves of violence and suppression (IFG 2001, 14-20). Previous goals of broad-based development are replaced with the goal of containing and managing the most noxious and threatening symptoms of this asymmetric system. Previous structures of corporatism and clientelism, which used the state's resources to incorporate 'surplus' populations, are difficult to sustain with the fiscal austerity of neo-liberal policies, and the legitimacy of peripheral states implementing neo-liberal policies falters.

Neoliberal globalism presents states with a thorny two-sided regulatory challenge: 1) the oft-noted economic challenge (e.g., how to incorporate the 'surplus' population and solve the intractable unemployment problem); 2) the less frequently noted law and order challenge (e.g., how to 'manage' the segments of

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that of five billion people living on the earth, at least 4.2 billion are 'unbankable' (*ibid*). There are currently no major plans of action to include the excluded masses in the global capitalist system.

[33] The net worth of the wealthiest 1% of US households exceeds that of the bottom 90%. While real wages in the US stagnated in the 1990s, CEO compensation packages increased by 535% (IFG 2001, 4). A recent poll suggested that only a minority of Canadians trust financial accounting practices of corporations, and 67% of Canadians think that corporate executives are overpaid. In the remarkable words of Hershell Ezrin, the CEO of the firm conducting the poll, "[t]his public concern over the ethics of our corporate system is not a simple fad, but rather *may herald the rise of a new form of populism*...No one should underestimate the far reaching ramifications of the current debate about the integrity of the market system". Andrew Willis, "Canadians don't trust executives, survey says," *Globe & Mail*, Tuesday, July 2, 2002. B5.

society marginalized by globalisation). Hoogvelt vividly describes the symptoms of this unmet challenge:

> The politic of exclusion takes many forms. We can see examples in the shooting of street children in Brazil and Columbia, and in the anti-immigration laws and the policing of the Mediterranean waters around 'fortress Europe'. We witness it in the policy of 'mass incarceration' in the US where over two million people (disproportionately black, young and unemployed) languish in jail at any one time. We see it happen in the politics of AIDS research where 90% of research and investment is spent on the development of drugs for the treatment of the 8 per cent of people who have AIDS in the developed countries, while snuffing out the funds and the research agenda for cheap vaccines to prevent the further spread of AIDS in the Third World (1997, 148).

Such symptoms suggest that globalism is not only marked by a consensus on capital mobility, but by a concomitant politics of supremacy and subordination to deal with those marginalized from the global system. With less consensus, rulers respond to ethico-political legitimacy deficits with greater coercion (Gill 1995, 400). The goal is no longer to incorporate, but to protect the wealth, privilege, and mobility of those at the top of the hourglass.

With this context of exclusion and violence in the global system, we are able to highlight an additional feature of globalisation processes. Globalised capitalism involves the changing relationship between of space and time, but more specifically, it also involves a fundamental transformation of the relationship between actors in the global economy. Hoogvelt emphasizes that while globalisation processes may bring capital and elites around the world closer to each other, there is another side of the story that is less frequently noted:

> …globalisation entails a process of intensification of linkages within the core of the global system, while its counterpart 'peripheralisation' becomes a process of marginalisation and expulsion that cuts across territories and national boundaries, rendering areas within the traditional core subject to the same processes of expulsion as large swathes of territories in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Hence *the structure of core-periphery becomes a social division, rather than a geographic one* (1997, 129, emphasis mine).

The use of the word "process" is important, because it emphasizes that globalism is not a completed state of affairs, but part of daily, ongoing, global struggles. Globalisation (and 'peripheralisation') are not independent, outside 'forces', but incomplete, ongoing processes involving human actors. Although observers might feel overwhelmed by an awesome scope and power of these processes, there is nothing inevitable about the continuation of 'peripheralisation'. We require a framework capable of seeing globalism as a structural phenomenon, related to an emerging regime of capital accumulation, without denying the effects of agency and resistance on the shape and texture of these structures. We want to avoid romanticising resistance to neoliberal globalism, at the same time we resist determinist depictions of globalisation as an omnipotent entity from which there is no escape. Who are the agents pushing forward the agenda of neoliberal globalism, and who are its discontents? Are networks of solidarity forming between these discontented individuals and groups? If globalism is perpetuating inequalities between rich and poor, where do these social struggles take place, and is there a unity between the globally disenfranchised, and geographically-dispersed victims of 'peripheralisation'?

iii. Contours of the new solidarity

> The key political tension in the coming era will be between the forces of neoliberal economic globalisation, seeking to expand the freedom of capital, and the forces of social resistance, seeing to preserve and to redefine community and solidarity.
> -Gills (2000)

☙ While discussions of social class remain relatively rare in the globalisation literature (Mann 2001/2, 464), a more common way of understanding difficult questions of agency and solidarity is through the notion of top-down, and bottom-up globalisation. Top-down globalisation refers to the movement of global market forces, a movement that is often beyond the territorial authority of national governments (Falk 1997). While top-down globalisation is often depicted in reified terms of abstract, rootless capital floating around the world, the existence of a transnational capitalist class is given shape in a steadily increasing body of literature (van der Pijl 1998, 2001/2; Sklair 1990; Comaroff & Comaroff 2001, 12; Robinson & Harris 2000).[34]

Bottom-up globalisation, in contrast, involves a much messier grouping of resistance movements that protest the democratic unaccountability, and socio-economic marginalisation of neoliberal globalism (Brecher et al. 2000). Although fundamentalist, reactionary forms of bottom-globalisation clearly exist, pro-democratic resistance movements are more eagerly studied (cf. Castells 1997). Bottom-up struggles are generally understood as attempt to re-embed economic systems in democratically organised social spaces, expand the bundle of basic citizenship rights, and achieve the economic opportunities necessary to make political rights meaningful. The notion of democratic 'globalisation-from-below' provides a thematic unity to the actions of civic initiatives around the world attempting to enforce a second phase of Polanyi's 'great transformation' on the expansive market forces of the global economy.

While helpful as an orientating device, the popular narrative of a global lumpen-proletariat 'from below' fighting the 'top-down' powers of transnational capital leaves many questions unanswered. How united are the forces of 'top-down' globalisation, particularly given the conflicts associated with recent corporate accounting scandals in the United States? As will be explored in Chapter Four, the notion of a top-down capital conspiracy is overtly simplistic, and requires a more subtle approach to the issue of the transnational capitalist class, and its relation to a middle-class grouping – the cadre class – that recognizes system instability, and has the potential to respond to popular demands for increased social equality and more sustainable life conditions. Not only is the 'top-down' category overly simplistic, but we must ask to what extent 'bottom-up' movements are able to make strategic transnational connections of solidarity. How can different marginalized and peripheral actors unite across structural inequalities and vast geographic distances? To what extent can we observe a "global grassroots solidarity [that] has the power to transform the world" (Brecher et al. 2000, ix)? What role do these transnational connections play contesting the hegemony of neo-liberal globalism?

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[34] See the symposium on the transnational capitalist class in *Science & Society 65* (4):464-508. Numerous authors react to the claim made by Robinson and Harris (2000)

The terrain of solidarity has changed with globalisation processes, and new forms of solidarity have emerged in response to the 'peripheralisation' of globalism.[35] Following the labour solidarity that emerged in response to early industrial capitalism, the "new solidarity" attempts to tame the ill effects – both social and ecological – of globalised capitalism. Just as the capitalism of the contemporary historical movement is unique, so are its solidarity projects, which take on a multiplicity of forms ranging from labour internationalism, to the street protests of

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that the integration of global capitalism has created both a transnational capitalist class and a world proletariat.

[35] Peter Waterman usefully culls multiple sources of evidence, authors, and aspects of what he has termed, "the new solidarity" on his "global solidarity web site". See http://www.antenna.nl/~waterman

new social movements, to cyber-solidarity. These forms emerge in a complex dialectic with the complexities of globalism, and cannot be reduced to any one format, or singular strategy. As Waterman puts it, "a complex capitalism needs (sorry!) a complex solidarity" (2000).[36]

While developments in information technology facilitate the integration of financial markets and new international institutions of governance, they have also allowed social movements to gain knowledge of the injustice and suffering inflicted by the global economy on the majority of the world's people. Optimistic perspectives contend that this knowledge then works to establish the "initial condition for a true universalization of the idea of justice and the undertaking of the necessary actions that will lead to its progressive realization" (Vilas 1994, 280). Although the possibilities for a democratically oriented global civil society exist, it is not yet clear to what extent this possibility can, or will be realised. Who, or what exactly are these "bottom-up" forces of globalisation? Do they exist at a scale that can match the top-down agencies of transnational capital, and does this "new solidarity" represent a paradigmatic shift in the logic of contestation to global capitalism? This is a central query of the dissertation. The project is not to determine whether or not the 'new solidarity' exists – a facile question that overlooks the obviousness of historical change, and the dialectical nature of capitalist contradiction. Instead, my goal is to explore degrees and contradictions of new forms of solidarity that emerge in response to the particularities of globalised capitalism.

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[36] Waterman attempts to give order to this complexity by identifying six primary forms of solidarity: *identity* (e.g., "workers of the world unite", or "sisterhood is global"), *substitution* (e.g. speaking for those unable to speak up for themselves), *complementarity* (e.g., inter-movement exchange on needs and goods), *reciprocity* (e.g. support between London and Australian dock workers), *affinity* (e.g., shared values of pacifists, ecologist, or indigenes), and *restitution* (e.g., accepting responsibility for historical wrong doings and struggling for compensation) (2000).

While bottom-up-globalisation and global civil society are much discussed, lauded, and theorized, actual agents of change are less well researched. Protestors in Seattle and Quebec City provide powerful visual images, but don't provide a complete picture of counter-hegemonic activities. Castells powerfully articulates the indeterminacy of agency at the end of *The Power of Identity*:

> It is this decentered, subtle character of networks of social change that makes it so difficult to perceive, or identify, new identity projects coming into being. Because our historical vision has become so used to orderly battalions, colourful banners, and scripted proclamations of social change, we are at a loss when confronted with the subtle pervasiveness of incremental changes of symbols processed through multiform networks, away from the halls of power. It is in these back alleys of society, whether in alternative electronic networks or in grassrooted networks of communal resistance, that I have sensed the embryos of a new society, labored in the fields of history by the power of identity (1997, 362).

Castells' words suggests a need for greater detail on how the agency of globalism (and counter-globalism) operates in specific movements, and in specific national contexts where wages are set, military forces employed, and policy battles fought. How does transnational capital subvert the democratic accountability of nation states, and how can it work to strengthen the capacities of particular state sectors (e.g., the military branch)? (See Chapter Five on the politics of supremacy and subordination in Mexico.) Where do the resistance efforts of bottom-up globalisation originate, and how can they bridge the structural inequalities embedded in the global system? (See Chapter Six on the Zapatismo transnational solidarity network.) How do relatively elite middle citizens work to bolster (or subvert) a global economic system based on exploitation and the promotion of consumer identities over citizenship? (See Chapter Seven on the fair trade movement.) How do resistance movements reconcile a sense of local community and ecological commons within a framework of global interconnectedness? (See Chapter Four on the commons). Rather than attempting to provide a metanarrative response to the myriad questions of top-down versus bottom-up globalisation, or purport to have resolved the Left's quest for the post-proletarian hero, I put forward these 'snapshots' to speak for themselves. These cases provide partial, contextual, but suggestive voices on where resistance occurs, and how we can learn to better depict the "decentered, subtle character" of social change described by Castells.

This approach to studying social agency can be loosely grouped within a tradition of neo-Gramscian approaches to understanding capitalist hegemony and resistance. A historical-materialist framework using Gramscian concepts provides a conception of globalisation that is complex, incorporates economic and cultural dimensions, and is dialectical in its approach to domination and resistance.[37] This framework resists deterministic conclusions, and instead compels the analyst to look for points of fissure, contradiction, and change. Popular culture is not a closed field of class domination, but a battlefield where groups continually struggle for cultural leadership, or hegemony. Hegemony refers to the replacement of societal coercion with consensus, although coercion may be used when consensus cannot be achieved (Gramsci 1997, 12, 276). Hegemony is not un-resisted, but tends to be part of a movement / counter-movement dynamic, as described by Polanyi in *The Great Transformation*, or thought of as "counter-hegemony" in Gramscian nomenclature (Polanyi 1957; Gramsci 1997). Gramscian concepts suggest that it is not enough to look at the material dimensions of capitalism, but that we must also examine its normative dimensions – its power at the level of ideas. Understanding the formation of normative legitimacy can help us understand how consent replaces coercion, how neo-liberal globalism has come to posit itself as part of common sense, and where this 'common sense' has been challenged.

Increasingly violent symptoms in the global political economy suggest that neoliberal globalism does not enjoy hegemony, but rather is in the midst of an organic crisis involving the reorganization of the ideas, institutions, and material capacities of the world order. Lipietz describes a return to the "famous nineteenth century 'problem of the dangerous classes', with the possibility of mass revolts destabilizing the system", and a less progressive alternative being "the spread of individual crime" (1992, 35). In Chapter Three I present evidence that the growth in the structural power of capital in the past two decades is politically, socially, economically, and ecologically unsustainable in its present form. Its contradictions generate counter-hegemonic resistance which may not overturn the system, but which serve to de-legitimise the supremacy of transnational capital and problematize a politics of consensus. State institutions face pressures from populations that require accountability to citizenry – pressures that worsen as states find it difficult to deliver the goods of economic growth and employment. Throughout this dissertation, I examine different instances where this coercion/consensus balance has shifted through globalisation processes. These cases suggest that it is difficult to draw a singular conclusion on this topic, since resistance ranges from the overtly militaristic resistance of pedagogical guerrillas (Chapter Five), to fair-trade strategies that often remain complicit with the cultural-ideology of consumerism (Chapter Seven). At the same time, observations of neo-liberal crisis, faltering hegemony, an emerging coercion and politics of exclusion, and the creation of new forms of transnational solidarity are overarching themes found throughout the chapters.

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[37] For a general overview of the Gramscian concept of hegemony, see Bocock (1986). For Gramscian applications in international relations see Gill (1993), and the classic work of Cox (1983). For applications in the realm of social movement analysis see Adkin (1998); Carroll (1996; 1997). For a critical response to anthropocentricism with Marxist traditions, see Chapters Three and Four of this dissertation.

As mentioned above, the crumbling of one paradigm doesn't give us a blueprint for an emerging alternative. While a Gramscian framework suggests the importance of examining the ideas that underwrite the legitimacy of the system, the concept of the historic bloc reminds theorists that intellectual protest is not a sufficient condition to induce radical change at the material and institutional level.[38] The concept of the historic bloc refers to a situation where there is an ideological-material alliance, and pinpoints three critical factors that must be examined by the researcher: 1) ideas, 2) institutions, and 3) material forces (Cox 1983, 169; Gramsci [1997], 366). In subsequent chapters, I attend to each of these dimensions. This is critical to avoid the common tendency to equate ethical dissent with a feasible program of post-capitalist transition. Paradigmatic transitions cannot happen purely on a normative level, but require a material, and institutional framework to serve as a practical endpoint. While the need for a new ethical common sense of solidarity is critical, it is also important to build a new political common sense of participation in multiple realms (particularly the economicplace and householdplace), and a new aesthetic common sense that challenges the powerful, but ecologically devastating seductions of consumerism.

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[38] The extent to which Gramsci believed ideas were the primary obstacle to social change is open for debate, particularly given the cryptic writing style found in the *Prison Notebooks*. Scott accuses Gramsci of overestimating the extent to which ideas constrain action, arguing that material structures present the primary obstacle to change at the level of peasant communities (1985, 322). While this may unfairly pigeon-hold Gramsci's position, Scott's discussion of hegemony remains one of the most useful in the field (1985, 322-350).

In sum, this research falls precisely in that messy middle ground of empirical research that attempts to further identify the shape and texture of bottom-up globalisation. This approach is inspired by E.P. Thompson's strategy of writing bottom-up history that eschews economic determinism, understanding exploitative relationships as more than the sum of grievances and mutual antagonisms, yet takes seriously the magnitude, and outright catastrophe of economic exploitation (Thompson 2001, 19, 21). Micro-politics are not depicted as idiographic ends in themselves, but as critical interpretive tools to explore the moral economy of social transformation. These details give sociological flesh to an understanding of resistance to the encroachment of market forces in England in the late 18th century, and today with the encroachment of neo-liberal globalism. Put simply, the objective is to use case studies to draw lessons for social theory on themes of global capitalism and resistance, as well as to aid understanding of the social forces and normative alternatives comprising bottom-up globalisation. They respond to, and provide provisional answers to Mann's prophetic pronouncement: "The 21^{st} century will likely present a new version of the old choice between "Socialism or Barbarism," though presumably the first of these two terms will be replaced by one with greater resonance in the new century" (2001/2, 468). It is to this task of defining these terms, and the question of epistemic paradigm shifts, that I will now turn.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

My intention in this chapter is not to make a definitive statement on the epistemological dimension of paradigm shifts, nor do I intend to provide the standard laundry list of research methods employed. This chapter is instead intended as a study of methodology in the classical philosophical sense (Morrow 1994, 36) that explores epistemological paradigm shifts in the sociological study of globalisation. Inspiration is taken from the writing of Paulo Freire, famed pedagogical theorist, revolutionary thinker, and eternal optimist. Today, in the face of seemingly inevitable process of globalisation (and 'peripheralisation'), Freire's appeal for a pedagogy hope is of tremendous relevance for globalisation scholars. A shorter version of this chapter co-authored with James Goodman is in submission for publication.

Epistemological transition: from detachment to hope in the ivory tower

> The social invention of a new emancipatory knowledge is, to my mind, one of the preconditions to break with capitalist self-reproduction. Such an invention, I argue, is a long social process that is already under way.
> -Santos (1995, 54-55).

> These and other ironies...point to an array of issues too little discussed in the academy: what is the role of upper-middle-class academics vis-à-vis political struggles?...How do we meet the obligations incurred as we convert the initiatives of the downtrodden into the means by which to advance professional careers?

-Fox and Starn (1997, 12).

I. Paradigm shifts and emancipatory knowledge

☙ A paradigm shift is notoriously difficult to definitively define or map out. This task is worsened by the fact that "in a period of paradigmatic transition, old knowledge is a poor guide" (Santos 1995, 108). This mandates the creation of new knowledge that is "premised upon the unthinking of the old and still-hegemonic knowledge", an epistemologically complex process that requires "thorough but not nihilistic destruction and discontinuous but not arbitrary reconstruction" (ibid.).

Contemporary epistemological crises fuse concern for knowledge with a concern for a sustainable, technologically appropriate vision of the good life.[1] Santos' work on paradigmatic transitions broadly identifies an emerging epistemological "paradigm of a prudent knowledge for a decent life" (1995, 22). By this, he refers to questions increasingly raised about the ability of modern science to deliver the goods of human betterment. From concerns over genetically engineered foods, to experiments in reproductive technology and cloning, to the links between industrialization, pathologies, and global warming, scientific advancement is increasingly perceived as socially regressive. Just because we *can*, it does not follow that we *should*. Scientific advancements in and of themselves do not guarantee social emancipation, but rather, require a paradigm of knowledge that explicitly fuses normative ideals with the search for knowledge. While more technology is not necessarily the answer to social and ecological problems of neo-liberal globalism, a turn away from knowledge towards traditionalism or fundamentalism is not an acceptable alternative. This begs the question of how we are to identify this emerging paradigm based on a "search for knowledge of a decent life", and its relationship to social and ecological problems associated with neo-liberal globalism.

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[1] Santos is clear to distinguish the current epistemological crisis from the scientific revolution of the sixteenth-century. Because modern societies have "already undergone a scientific revolution, its emergent paradigm cannot be merely a scientific paradigm (the paradigm of a prudent knowledge), but must also be a social paradigm (the paradigm of a decent life)" (1995, 22).

By contrasting two visions of knowledge – knowledge-as-regulation and knowledge-as- emancipation – Santos provides a framework for thinking about movement beyond a positivist framework of natural science based on asserting control over the natural world (Santos 1995, 25-26). According to Santos, any epistemological paradigm implies a trajectory from a point of ignorance (point A), and towards an opposing point of knowledge (point B) (1995, 25). Within the hegemonic paradigm of "knowledge-as-regulation", the trajectory is understood as involving movement away from a state of ignorant "chaos", and towards an opposing point of "order" (1996, 26). While this worldview can be readily observed within scientific and technological projects that tame and control the 'natural world' (e.g. dams, mining projects, genetic experimentation), this paradigm is also ubiquitous in the social sciences. The dominant tradition of sociology involves social scientific interventions designed to eliminate 'chaos' and impose social order (e.g. through welfare reform, urban planning, demographic controls, mainstream criminology, and development studies).

In contrast to knowledge as regulation, Santos identifies an alternative epistemological paradigm that he terms "knowledge-as-emancipation" (1995, 26). This vision is characterized by a trajectory from a point of ignorance rooted in colonial oppression, and towards a contrary state of knowledge that Santos terms "solidarity" (ibid.). This vision of knowledge-as-emancipation evolved alongside colonialism, but has existed as a secondary, and subservient worldview. In Santos' words, "knowledge-as-regulation won primacy over knowledge-as emancipation: order became the hegemonic way of knowing, and chaos became the hegemonic form of ignorance" (1995, 26). Within hegemonic modern thought traditions, emancipatory knowledge came to be defined as knowledge of order, rather than knowledge geared toward the destruction of colonial subjugation and the establishment of solidarity based on equality. Freedom is order, and chaos is oppressive.

Santos argues that to remedy this epistemological imbalance, academics interested in the pursuit of social justice must deliberately subordinate knowledge-as-regulation to knowledge-as-emancipation (1995, 26). This requires a two-pronged approach. The first strategy is to re-assess chaos as a form of knowledge, a move inspired by chaos theory and risk theory, both of which have suggested greater prudence in light of complex technological interventions into the 'chaotic' natural world (Santos 1995, 26; Beck, 1992; Virilio 1999; Jacobs 2001). This requires a move away from the *machismo* arrogance associated with technological utopianism and denial of risk, based in a new psychology that acknowledges the "courage to be afraid" of the unknown implications of wide-scale human interventions in the natural world (Santos 1995, 27; McNeil 1999).

The second strategy is to reassess, and re-evaluate solidarity as a form of knowing that counteracts the epistemological ignorance of colonialism. By colonialism, Santos is referring to the "ignorance of reciprocity, in the incapacity to conceive of the other as other than an object" (1995, 27). Colonial ignorance of the Other is based on the subjection of conquered peoples, as well as a denial of reciprocal relationships with the natural world (See Chapter Three and Four). This is not an innocent state of unawareness, but a wilful ignorance embedded in historical material processes whereby exploitation and plunder provided the basis for European industrial expansion (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999, 34; Wolf 1982). Neither is colonial ignorance simply a distant memory. Epistemological colonialism lives through continued denial of the Other within hegemonic thought systems – the 'invisible' millions suffering from AIDS in the developing world, the secondary value of human lives lost in remote battlefields, and the ghosts of species that quietly disappear from the planet.

To counter colonial ignorance requires knowledge projects oriented towards solidarity with the Other. According to Santos, knowledge of solidarity is "the knowing obtained in the ever-unfinished process of one's becoming capable of reciprocity through the construction and recognition of intersubjectivity" (1995, 27). Knowledge of solidarity is not a finite state, but an ongoing, un-ending process that avoids the ever-present tendency to "translate everything into our own terms" (Harvey 1999, 118). While a perfect translation is never possible, what is important for the solidarity project is the process, where we pursue an "interactive life that allows us to live in dialogue with difference" (Harvey 1999, 129). An emancipatory knowledge of solidarity sees a dialogue with the Other not as an abstract idealist process, but as rooted in the contradictions of historical colonialism and contemporary capitalist accumulation. More concretely, understanding the Other requires that we recognize not just differences with distant beings, but inequality and subjugation perpetuated through the expansion of global capitalism. It requires that we upset the liberal vision of the autonomous, free-willed individual (e.g. the sovereign consumer freely choosing products in the supermarket), and explore the webs of reciprocity and responsibility that quietly (and violently) undergird the privilege of the minority world.

While Santos' project of developing knowledge based on solidarity is an interesting proposition for those committed to the study of emancipatory social movements and globalisation, it lacks specificity. Concrete strategies must be developed and materialist obstacles to solidarity projects identified. Fortunately, the notion of knowledge-as-emancipation has taken on myriad concrete forms: liberation theologies, feminist writings, queer theory, deep ecologies, African-

American scholarship, post-colonial theory, and others. These traditions have struggled to sustain a trajectory from colonialism towards solidarity, from wilful ignorance towards knowledge of the different, and subjugated Other. These projects have all attempted to develop explicit projects exposing the symbiotic relationship between ignorance and oppression, and have much to say about what a 'knowledge-as-emancipation' project looks like on the ground. In this chapter, I explore one particularly important, but neglected form of emancipatory knowledge: the pedagogical theories of Paulo Freire. Little known in the field of globalisation studies, Freire's writings can further expound the nature of a paradigmatic transition as it relates to the study of globalisation.

Globalisation studies are characterized by a decided lack of consensus on how to pursue emancipatory knowledge, even when there is agreement that this is a laudatory aim. After sketching out the shape of this debate within globalisation studies, I consider four dualisms that elucidate the insights of Freirean pedagogy. I argue that globalisation researchers need to root emancipatory knowledge in a dialogue between detachment and action. Freire insists that research can, and should be a dialogue. In this dialogue, tension between detachment and action is both unavoidable and productive. While dialogue can be conflictual, this is not a conflict that can be avoided or even resolved. Dialogue does not guarantee harmonious outcomes – far from it! What it does offer is a process that exposes academics to the colonial ignorance associated with neo-liberal globalism – an ignorance often perpetuated by the privileged position of ivory tower isolation.

II. Globalisation studies from left to right: is resistance futile?

> Never before has it been possible to know so much about our world, yet disinterest and ignorance appear to be growing.
>
> -Jon Sobrino, liberation theologist

☙ At a closed-door conference session in Vancouver, a roomful of international globalisation scholars struggled with the idea of detachment from the oppressed Other. Certainly we were all committed to the idea of research for transformative social change. Clearly, as left intellectuals, we had moved out of the ivory tower and believed in the necessity of struggling against the inequities perpetuated by neo-liberal globalism. Obviously academics needed to keep issues of positionality, privilege, and power at the forefront of their consciousness and analysis. But if these positions were all self-evident, why did such a spirited debate arise on the issue of working with 'outsiders'? Despite agreement on the exploitative nature of global capitalism, there was little agreement on the methodology underlying an emancipatory knowledge of globalization.

The working group was comprised of nineteen globalisation scholars from four countries working on projects evaluating the sustainability of neo-liberal globalism. The disagreement centred on whether to allow social activists to attend an upcoming working session planned to take place in Mexico City. On one side of the debate were those who believed that scholars must engage with those most affected by, and engaged with resistance to neo-liberal globalism. These engagements were not seen as acts of charity, but part of a search for greater truth through dialogue – part of a necessary praxis dimension to social research.

On the other side of the debate, the demand for social attachment was criticised for dancing dangerously close to New Right arguments that prioritise instrumental 'research-for-hire' agendas. A demand for social engagement was seen to comply with the argument that universities and academics need to make their research 'relevant' to the outside community (read: the corporate community that increasingly funds research projects). These scholars made the case for freedom of academic thought – for academic work that is unconstrained by outside motivations, and not simply functionaries for various social causes – radical or otherwise.

As a 'junior' scholar in the room and a member of the first debate camp, I left the meeting feeling frustrated by a discussion that was spirited, but sharply polarised. It seemed that we needed to have some way of arguing for academic rootedness, while at the same time making a defence of academic detachment. This of course, seemed contradictory. How can one be rooted and detached simultaneously? Was being 'rooted' an inherently radical position, or a tendency that is easily absorbed into the agendas of research partners, thus sacrificing the degree of detachment necessary to be rigorously empirical?

Questions about academic detachment and involvement in struggles for emancipation are hardly new. As Karl Marx famously noted, the point is not simply to interpret the world, but to change it. Antonio Gramsci critiqued the status-quo positioning of traditional intellectuals, and called for a new type of intellectualism that was specialized, directive, and political (1997, 8-12). Debates about intellectuals, theory, and practice were particularly vibrant after the student protests of 1968, and propagated a range of approaches and methods: ethnomethodology, grounded research, participatory action research, feminist approaches to the social sciences, as well as a renewed interest in adult education and its potential to promote progressive social change.[2] Feminist theorist Dorothy Smith criticised the idea of a sociology that could create objective knowledge that wasn't situated in individual, corporeal experience, and that wasn't articulated to expose "relations of ruling" (1990). Alvin Gouldner called for a "reflexive sociology" that would defy positivism, changing not just the subject of knowledge but the relationship between sociologists and their subject matter. Reflexive sociology would create radical sociologists conscious of their relationship to knowledge-creating processes, and which no longer viewed the subjects of knowledge as "alien others, or as mere objects for our superior technique and insight" (1970, 488).

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[2] For an excellent collection of 'action' oriented methods (that includes both practical examples and metatheoretical discussion) see Reason & Bradbury (2001).

While these debates are still a part of social science discourse, they occupy a relatively inconspicuous role on the academic landscape.[3] After the fall of the Soviet Union, the 1990s were characterized by a dwindling faith in emancipatory metanarratives. This simultaneously spelled the end of a certain political and academic discourse of hope – a development that was usually shuttled into rigid partisan debates between 'moderns' and 'postmoderns'. While modern approaches were depicted as naïve, totalizing programs for social change, a vision of postmodern theorizing as self-indulgent, narcissistic navel-gazing persisted. The truth lay somewhere in the middle. Attempts to restore disciplinary authority are often unreflective and rest on arrogant, positivist assumptions about the intellectual's epistemic privilege. At the same time, a certain 'postmodern' theoretical climate cast a smothering blanket of scepticism over any emancipatory aspirations (Best & Kellner, 1991). Left academics lost the courage and the capacity to dream of a different world and the age of 'development' was pronounced over – at the same time basic human need for the worlds' poorest people persisted. The triumph of fatalism in academia dovetailed nicely with the neo-liberal political philosophy of TINA – there is no alternative. As David Harvey writes, "the inability to find an 'optimism of the intellectual' with which to work through alternatives has now become one of the most serious barriers to progressive politics" (2000, 17).

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[3] For a notable exception to this trend within sociology, see Agger (2000).

While prominent theoreticians cast doubt on the idea of emancipatory narratives, financial pressures placed on the social sciences under neo-liberal governance increased the pressure on academics to conduct 'applied' research, and spurred a right-wing backlash against seemingly useless and esoteric university undertakings. Of course the demand for 'applied' methodologies is not the same as a requisite to be radical, or critical. State-funding agents, such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRCC), place a premium on research projects that co-operate with community groups, and promise to disseminate research findings to 'stake-holders'. What seems most important is employing a method of engagement; the ideas or direction that underlie such engagement often appear of secondary concern. Put in the language of Santos, the priority is for a regulatory knowledge of order, rather than a emancipatory knowledge of solidarity.[4]

While the pressures on academics to be socially 'relevant' intensify, debates on detachment and engagement seem stuck in the narrow binary of submersion/detachment witnessed in the Vancouver conference room. The choices seem limited. We can work as unsophisticated empiricists, uncritically engaged in fieldwork using positivist methodologies. On the other hand, we can perform as detached theorists floating critically above social agents, engaging episodically using tools of ironic detachment, or uncritical celebrations of difference and heterogeneity. We can either deny the existence of an ivory tower, or we can relish the critical distance it provides. The poverty of these choices demands a position of greater nuance and broader possibilities. While absolute distance from the object of study is both impossible and undesirable, the same applies to full involvement. The desire for detachment can produce hard and fast distinctions between researchers 'inside' the academy who presume to investigate society in the 'field'. Likewise, a desire for involvement can wipe out critical distance, transforming the researcher into a reporter or a functionary for social movements.

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[4] This can be observed in the SSHRC prioritisation of "social cohesion" as one of three key policy interests in the strategic grants program (http://www.sshrc.ca/english/resnews/pressreleases/archive/themes.html). While this research agenda is not a prototypical case of right-wing social engineering, it nevertheless operates within a paradigm of 'knowledge-as-regulation' that prioritises the imposition of order over a messier, and more chaotic project of unsettling privilege in order to construct solidarity.

To move beyond such a paucity of choice, I identify four methodological conundrums, presented as dilemmas or dualisms, that must be addressed if globalisation research is to become more akin to Santos' knowledge-as-emancipation, rather than knowledge-as-regulation. In each dualism, I outline how Freire can help redefine these as productive tensions to be developed, rather than as conflicts to be suppressed (see Table 1 below). Although these arguments have a cognitive, theoretical dimension, the chapter draws on examples from personal involvement in movements contesting neo-liberal globalism.

First I argue that researchers have to work across divides between theory and practice. The central epistemological position is that detachment has to be combined with involvement if research is to have emancipatory effects. Theoretical reflection is inherently impoverished without practical engagement with the issues at stake on an everyday level. Equally, involvement in the absence of reflection can generate a direction-less activism. Drawing on Freire's concept of *praxis*, I illustrate how researchers can transform this divide into a productive tension. Research and campaigns against transnational mining corporations and promoting conscientious consumption through 'fair trade' are discussed to illustrate these points.

Second, researchers have to engage with normative issues, and supersede a false dichotomy between 'what is' and 'what ought to be'. There is an urgent need for normative reflection if research is to assist in shifting the political agenda. While 'naming the enemy' is clearly important, a purely descriptive analysis of globalisation tends to stifle debate about what changes ought to occur. At the same time, failure to generate alternatives from experiences can lead to an equally anodyne utopianism. To explore this I extrapolate on Freire's conceptualisation of *generative themes* – a tool he uses to ground literacy training in a process of social envisioning. Generative themes sustain the tension between describing current realities of globalisation, and envisaging hope about creating alternative ways of living. The necessary balance between oppositionalism and utopianism is highlighted, drawing on the experience of campaigns against inter-state neo-liberalism, notably against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment and the World Trade Organisation.

Third, researchers must establish a methodology that reconciles subjective and objective forms of understanding. This requires emotional and personal involvement in the process of generating awareness of objectivist tendencies, and of alternatives to them. Over-emphasis on objective understanding can detach the researcher from the research process, while a reliance on subjective knowledge can lapse into intuitionism. Again we turn to Freire, drawing on his concept of *conscientization*, a process that allows subjective engagement alongside investigation of objective power structures. The assertion of autonomy against neo-liberal globalisation, that in the Zapatista case has created a process of conscientization in Chiapas, across Mexico and in the heartlands of capitalism, presents a powerful demonstration of this concept.

Fourth, researchers must bring together structural analysis and agency, bridging a binary that often manifests as fatalism and naïve utopianism. Abstracting structural analysis from the process of contestation can be profoundly dispiriting, generating a resigned passivity. Equally important, debate about agency is central to understanding the dynamics of globalisation. This tension reflects questions of strategy, or 'where do we go from here?' Using Freire, the *banking model* of knowledge creation is juxtaposed against a *dialogical model*. In a banking model, the omnipotent globalisation researcher assumes control over the research process. In a dialogical model, the researcher engages in an active dialogue with activists – not as an act of charity, but based on the belief that knowledge, resistance to globalisation, and a sense of hope only emerges through dialogue. In other words, dialogue is not a gift, but a foundational strategic requirement that encapsulates all aspects of the research process, and is vital to escaping the resigned passivity of neo-liberal ideology. The creation of alternative sites for dialogue designed to cross divides between researchers and activists are discussed to illustrate these issues.

Table 1: Summary of the argument

metatheory	Dualism	Research Question	Freirean concept	Examples of Works in Progress
Epistemology	Theory–Practice	Reflection or activism?	Praxis	Anti-corporate campaigns and 'Fair Trade' initiatives
Normativity	Is–Ought	Empiricism or utopianism?	*Generative Themes*	Contesting interstate neo-liberalism – the fight against the MAI
Methodology	Subjectivity–Objectivity	Participatory action or detachment?	*Conscientization*	Autonomy movements and grass-roots pedagogy
Strategy	Structure – Agency	Passivity or voluntarism?	*Banking education versus dialogue*	'Alternative' think tanks and research networks

Throughout the chapter I focus on the dialectic between detachment and involvement, debating how it is manifested in these four dualisms –theory and practice, the 'is' and the 'ought', objective and subjective approaches, and hope and fatalism. Drawing on Freire, I argue that we need to work across these counter-posed positions. While Freire's writing was geared to the specific dilemmas of adult literacy, it offers profound insight into issues of social action and neo-liberal globalism. His writings encourage us to engage with on-the-ground contestation of neo-liberal globalism, exploring its role in knowledge creation. This is seen as a central requirement for globalisation research that builds hope and promotes emancipation.

Hope is a particularly important antidote to the fatalist ideologies of neo-liberal globalism. To resist the imperatives of globalism is seen as resisting 'reality'. Critical globalisation researchers are faced with a thorny two-sided problem: exposing the enemy, and constructing hope for change. The second task is especially daunting. Efforts to instil hope may be read as idealistic, rhetorical, or not firmly grounded in the process of contestation. Yet without hope, we may dream of change, but never struggle for it. Researchers who seriously seek to change the prevailing order must create this hope.

Issues of hope and academic responsibility are particularly sharp for globalisation researchers. They – I – must contend with asocial global forces central to the ideology of neo-liberal globalism. For neo-liberals, the imperatives of globalisation are characterised as irresistible, almost natural (Ohmae, 1991). Global market forces are frequently depicted as acting over and outside the human domain – akin to Adam Smith's invisible hand, but at a much larger scale. Any attempt to manipulate such powerful forces is not only futile, but dangerous. Such fatalism is neatly summarized by the acronym 'TINA' – There Is No Alternative – or what Freire termed, it 'is what it has to be' (1994, 19). The TINA scenario is of course ideological, and obscures the interests it serves. More critical forms of globalisation research write social action back into globalisation, asserting that global forces are social practices that are not beyond human manipulation (e.g.,Sklair 2000). These approaches often tend to write from the academy for society, and deal with 'the people' only at a very high level of abstraction (e.g. through concepts of 'global civil society'), and ultimately rely on the epistemic authority of the university (e.g. Held et al. 1999; Linklater, 1998). Some write to highlight the potential forces for change, but leave these as tantalising pointers, perhaps for other more practical people to explore. Hardt and Negri expose the difficulties of this position halfway through their exposition of contemporary globalisation as Empire:

> Even when we manage to touch on the productive, ontological dimension of the problematic and resistances that arise there, however we will still not be in the position… to point to an already existing and concrete elaboration of a political alternative to Empire. And no such effective blueprint will ever arise from a theoretical articulation such as ours. It will arise only in practice… [some]… experiment or series of experiments will certainly be necessary today to take that next collective step and create a new social body beyond Empire' (2000, 206).

While expressing a refreshing degree of humility, Hardt and Negri's admissions place themselves in the realm of 'theory', leaving others to engage in 'practice'. Texts such as these are in danger of leaving the peoples, communities, and activists engaged with globalisation at the margins, or on the horizon, rather than at the centre. This may be both a metaphorical and literal marginality, as in the case of closed-door academic conferences on globalisation. Ironically this epistemological standpoint can reproduce the power-divides that are being critiqued, and is ultimately inadequate to the task of contesting neo-liberal globalism.

The detachment tendency cannot be reduced to the laziness, elitism, or lack of commitment of globalisation researchers. It is a much broader phenomenon, reflecting a theory of knowledge creation rooted in the detachment of modern philosophical thought from material culture. While 'nature' has been sequestered in the annals of modern science, modern philosophical theory became increasingly marginal to modern society (Borgmann 1995, 86). While liberal and Marxist political philosophy address material culture, it is often reduced to 'who-gets-what' scenarios abstracted from normative questions, and from the agents of change. Borgmann captures this tendency in the notion of the 'device mechanism', which describes a relationship with material culture that is shallow, individualist, disembodied, oriented towards immediate consumption, and unconnected to the wider social sphere, to others, or to the physical and social environment. The alternative is a relation to material culture that is deeply communal, rooted in a practice rather than immediate consumption, and requiring a life of engagement with the physical and social world.

It is not at all clear how deeply-engaged moral relationships with the material culture of globalisation can be achieved. Grounded forms of grassroots critique that introduce everyday perspectives from below, rather than macro themes from above are a starting point. Even then, the issues are not straightforward. Positionality – the speaking position of the researcher – remains a central issue, and raises difficult questions of power. How, for instance, can researchers from the global North, the minority world, presume to write the global South, the global majority, into their perspective? Many of these issues are addressed by development studies researchers, but without escaping them: the field remains plagued with eurocentrism, institutionalized through colonial legacies of Orientalism and the power inequities of knowledge production (Said 1986; 1978). The legacies continue, leading us to question to what extent globalisation research, much of which is written by and for those in the Global North, is a branch of regional or sectoral studies that reflects the specific preoccupations, needs and career strategies of Northern researchers.

Even when the need for a grounded perspective is identified, it is not always clear where, or how to proceed. In an article on 'grassroots globalisation', Appadurai identifies key problems in globalisation studies, such as the "growing disjuncture between the globalisation of knowledge and the knowledge of globalisation", as well as a need to "democratize the flow of knowledge about globalisation itself" (2000, 18). He earmarks important objectives for the broadening of globalisation research, and even uses the language of Freire to describe such a process. At the same time, Appadurai tends to find solutions within an idealist standpoint that underestimates the power and salience of material structures shaping what knowledge is available and possible. He argues that "all forms of critique, including the most arcane and abstract, have the potential for changing the world", and sees the "single greatest obstacle to grassroots globalisation as "the lack of a clear picture among their key actors of the political, economic, and pedagogic advantages of counter globalisation" (2000, 17). Globalisation is not seen as a new epoch "in the history of capital", but "is marked by a new role for the imagination in social life" (2000, 3). Like Hegel, Appadurai seems to suggest that a resolution of capitalisms' fundamental dialectics can occur in one's head, with appropriate creative imagination. Research is seen as evolving from a process that is separate and apart from social movements, or social change more generally:

> . . .those critical voices who speak for the poor, the vulnerable, the dispossessed, and the marginalized in the international fora in which global policies are made lack the means to produce a systemic grasp of the complexities of globalisation (Appadurai 2000, 18).

Hope is pitched almost exclusively on the level of ideas: if only a "clear picture" of globalisation was available, it would be possible to create a "level playing field where grassroots activists could compete with globalisation from above" (2000, 17).

Creating a 'grassroots' globalisation research requires more than collaboration on the level of imagination and ideas; these are necessary but not sufficient conditions. What is required is a research process seen as social action undertaken *with* rather than *for* others. This dialogue involves ideas, but must also involve an engagement with material structures. But how can we develop a theory of knowledge for a materialist, dialogic globalisation research? What exactly does the alternative of Freirean dialogue put forward?

III. Globalisation and dialogue: gleanings from Freire and the field

> While there are many professors who live admirably dual lives writing both for academic and broadly public constituencies, that activity is thought of as bipolar.
> -Brennan (1997, 73).

☙ To understand the academic dominance of detachment over dialogue we need to step outside the university, and consider the broader cultural context of late capitalist societies. A Freirean concept of dialogue provides a sharp contrast with the dominant Western cultural leitmotif of detached, ironic cool – the cultural equivalent of academic detachment. Cool is a critical component of western consumer societies. It correlates with Borgman's device mechanism; it is shallow, individualistic, uncommitted, and consumption-oriented. While cool has origins in the nonchalant anti-establishment of rebellious sub-cultures of African-America, it has merged into the collective mainstream, and is used by diverse sources ranging from the image makers behind New Labour, to the marketers on

Madison Avenue (Frank 1997; Pountain & Robins 1999/2000). Cool is characterized by four key traits – detachment from social issues, narcissism, irony and hedonism – and in the absence of faith in utopias, it provides a way to live with lowered expectations (Pountain & Robins 1999/2000, 8-11). The problem is that "cool is a poor adhesive for a society" (ibid., 12). The maintenance of a real democracy, particularly with creeping corporate control of political processes and colonization of the lifeworld, requires moral engagement and commitment – not ironic detachment.

In the cultural context of cool, it may seem archaic, hackneyed, and even a bit corny to bring up dialogue. Isn't dialogue the stuff of new age pop psychology, or consciousness raising circles? And more to the point, what does dialogue have to do with the sort of hard-nosed globalisation research that serious scholars are engaged with?

Dialogue is an important tool precisely because it is the antithesis of cool. It calls for a moral engagement with 'old-fashioned' values like love, faith, and hope – the normative commitments that are central to emancipatory knowledge. Dialogue provides us with resources to substantiate a morally-engaged critique of material culture, and, more specifically, of neo-liberal globalism. Paulo Freire's work provides a critical reference point for defending a vision of self-realisation based on inter-subjective dialogue, rather than an instrumental subject-object relationships (Morrow & Torres, 2001). He says ridiculously uncool things, such as, '[I]f I do not love the world – and if I do not love life – if I do not love people – I cannot enter into dialogue.' (1970, 71). Such a starting point of radical humanism jars sharply with many of the prevailing assumptions and attitudes of academic research.[5]

In the following sections I unpack the Freirean concept of dialogue, suggesting how it is able to transcend key academic dualisms. This discussion by no means 'solves' the many methodological problems attached to globalisation research, nor will it provide a firm criterion for what constitutes adequate emancipatory knowledge. Rather, the intention is to draw attention to particularly promising streams of research that emphasize the importance of human action against neo-liberal globalism, while retaining an understanding of systemic obstacles.

i. Between theory and practice: praxis

> The "wise and good" who do not work with their hands to earn a living must guard against the wayward flights of the free mind.
> -Yi-Fu Tuan (1989, 141).

> Solidarity requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is in solidarity . . . True solidarity is found only in the plentitude of this act of love, in its existentiality, in its praxis. To affirm

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[5] Freire's radical humanism admittedly presents problems for the development of ecocentric theory. However, this does not eliminate the value of Freire's contributions, but instead suggests the importance of a research agenda that integrates human perspectives with ecological imperatives. See Chapter Three and Four for a discussion of ecocentricity and its challenges to anthropocentrism, and O'Sullivan (1999) for an excellent discussion of transformative learning which addresses the question of human and planetary survival.

> that men and women are persons and
> as persons should be free, and yet to do
> nothing tangible to make this affirmation
> a reality, is a farce.
> -Paulo Freire (1970, 31-32)

☙ While the university serves as an employer and second home for academic-activists, off-campus interactions provide much of the inspiration for emancipatory research on globalisation. Too often, however, the academic's political commitments and academic pursuits remain separate, bifurcated realms. Freire provides insight into how they can, and must be reunited. The search for a greater truth leads us to avoid choosing between reflection and activism and instead ground research in a dialogue between theory and practice.

As a preface to this discussion, it is important to note that Freire's work is not laid out in a series of simple 'how-to' statements. He does not give a blue-print for emancipation, and his vision does not contain a teleologically defined end-point. Freire states, 'I cannot propose to the oppressed of the world what I believe would be best for them' (Freire & Macedo, 1995, 390). He disdains '[t]exts that primarily give recipes' which encourage the 'domestication of the mind' (as in McLaren, 1988, 233). How can Freire have an ethical vision that does not specify a blueprint or an ultimate end-point? How does he pay tribute to the utopian imagination while not predetermining the outcome?

The key to Freire's open-ended vision of emancipation lies in his great faith in dialogue – as a pedagogy that is never finished but is 'made and remade' (Freire, 1970, 30). For Freire, dialogue is not a method, but an epistemological necessity in the struggle to learn about, and overcome oppression (Torres, 1994b, 431; O'Cadiz & Torres, 1994, 214). Dialogue cannot be performed in a detached, mechanical matter, but must be founded on a dialectic between action and reflection. Action without reflection is inauthentic activism, while reflection without action is inauthentic verbalism (Freire, 1970, 68). When action and reflection are united, we achieve a social praxis facilitating access to greater truth, or what Friere calls 'true words'. A true word has two parts: action and reflection, both of which are required for transformation of the world (Freire, 1970, 33). Freire writes that 'liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it' (1970, 60). True words cannot be spoken by a vanguard, or in isolation, but must be spoken in dialogue. Freire insists that the goal is not to 'win the people over', but to engage in dialogue to learn about objective situations and consciousness (1970, 76).

Freire's words have direct implications for the ubiquitous 'theory versus practice' chasm, and its relation to the academic pursuit of greater truth(s). His notion of praxis suggests that the knowledge of the isolated, detached theorist is incomplete. Although the on-the-ground existential subject possesses unique practical knowledge, this knowledge is also incomplete. With a dialogue between theoretical insights and concrete existential perspectives, a relationship can emerge that is "mutually informing, and "mutually transforming" (Leonard 1990, 162). What is important is this process of exchange, not the expectation of achieving a perfect theory, complete knowledge, or total liberation. Freire insists that 'the only way...is to experience the tension between theory and praxis without denying one or the other. Thus I am never interested just in theory, just in [practice], but in the relationship between them' (Olson, 1992, 6-7).

Freire's ideas on praxis are a particularly interesting counterpoint for the contemporary gap between theory and practice in critical theory. This gap has had serious consequences for all of the various branches of critical theory ranging from feminist theorizing, to queer theory, to the neo-Gramscian applications of international political economy (Germain and Kenny, 1998). As extreme post-modern approaches abandon themselves to pyrrhonism, social movements continue their practical struggles to expand rights, explore opportunities, and protect the social and ecological commons. Meanwhile, much theorising remains detached from practical struggles. The goal of the 'left' since Marx to unite theory and practice seems scarcely fulfilled.

Ironically, critical theory's meta-critiques of modernity had the potential to supersede the theory/practice chasm (see Leonard 1990). These critiques delivered the central insight that all theory is necessarily historically and contextually specific, and brought increasing awareness that knowledge is contingent, partial, and historical. But instead of following this insight through in search for such knowledge, critical theory remained focused on detached, metatheoretical critiques. As a result, critical theory continues to look like "academic, intellectual introspection", rather than "politically engaged, emancipatory critique" (Leonard 1990, 6). To overcome this gap, Leonard draws lessons from what he calls "critical theory in political practice". He argues that to have emancipatory potential, critical theory must do three things: 1) identify sources of domination, 2) have an idea of an alternative way of life free from domination, and 3) have a specific constituency to which it is referring (1990, 4).

Although many academics would quickly (and defensively) dismiss Leonard's requirements as anti-intellectual sophistry, lessons from social movements demonstrate the epistemological rewards of maintaining a Freirean dialogue with radical politics. These empirical cases not only nourish a sense of hope, but provide globalisation scholars with greater knowledge about the subtleties of domination and resistance. This brings us to the primary subject matter: the struggle against neoliberal globalism. In these cases it appears that detached, universal knowledge projects have serious limitations – limits that underscore the need to balance between the energy of activism, and the imperative to continually reflect on such activism.

In the current struggle against neo-liberalism worldwide, anti-corporate campaigns take two primary forms of practice, both of which suggest the importance of complementary theoretical reflections. The first strategy is to target transnational corporations (TNCs), calling them to account for their social and ecological exploitation (Goodman, 2001). The second focuses on constructing alternatives, for instance through Local Exchange Schemes (LETS) or fair trade initiatives. The problem with both strategies, as with other types of anti-capitalist actions, is that counter-hegemonic action may unwittingly adapt and affirm the current order rather than destabilise it. This phenomenon cannot be avoided through *a priori* assertions, but rather, only becomes clear in the context of a specific struggle identifying specific sources of domination and related to specific constituencies. In both types of struggle, strategic reflection is an indispensable weapon in avoiding corporate co-optation, and encouraging self-awareness on the part of relatively privileged core activists.

The first type of anti-corporate activism, manifest in the new wave of corporate campaigns epitomised by campaigns against Nike sweatshops, is largely based in the North. It signals a growing Northern concern with the power of TNCs, and a growing TNC vulnerability to movement pressures (Ross 1997; Starr 2000, 65). Naomi Klein expresses thanks to these corporations for unifying the opposition and operating as a sort of "gateway drug", leading activists to explore the "arcane world of international trade and finance" (2000, 85). TNC executives have begun feeling the pressure from public campaigns in the North that target consumer preferences and investor confidence. At the same time, many TNCs are also facing escalating pressures from locally based movements, especially amongst communities affected by the extraction or production process (see Evans, Goodman & Lansbury 2002).

Corporations have turned to Northern campaigners to help them monitor corporate practices and verify improvements, and many Northern-based campaign NGOs have joined the plethora of consultative, advisory and monitoring groups set up by corporations. Although pragmatic concerns may justify co-operation, the benefits of cooperation can obscure the dangers of cooptation.[6] These problems worsen with the ubiquitous core tendency to emphasise unity and universalism across lines of class, nationality, gender, race, and caste. Approaches that emphasise "bottom-up globalisation", "global civil society", or the "international people's movement" (Klein 2000, 84-85) tend to un-critically link farmers in India with American students boycotting Taco Bell, minimizing the many levels of inequality and geographic scale that separate them (See Chapter Six for a discussion of scale and transnational solidarity networks).

While such core activism is often productively engaged in dialogue with peripheral actors, in many instances it seems questionable whether Northern campaign organisations have any sort of mandate from the peoples affected by corporate abuses. Indeed, affected peoples often do not agree that engagement and cooperation is the best way forward (see Evans, Lansbury & Goodman 2002). Corporations may play on ideological divides between movements, and make use of socio-economic and spatial divisions to marginalise radical opponents, portraying them as middle class urban campaigners wishing to override local preferences, or as unreasonable 'backward' peoples nurturing an irrational opposition to development and progress. The ability to step back from these manipulations is crucial to the successful evolution of anti-corporate activism. Strategic reflection about the *theory* of corporate power and the ideological *practices* of legitimation can permit a sharper critique that is more aware of inequality and privilege within anti-corporate campaigns.

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[6] For example, after environmentalist John Hair became secretary-general of the International Council on Mining and Metals he stated: "I've fought these battles for so long and been outside the tent…Now I'm focused on making progress instead of making a point". This comment (and the accompanying article) demonstrated little reflexivity about the employment of green voices by corporations to legitimise one of the most notorious industrial polluters. Alanna Mitchell, "Mining firms have decided they're ready to go green", *Globe & Mail*, Monday, May 20, 2002. A6.

While corporate campaigns target the source of abuses, a range of other initiatives seek to envisage practical alternatives to neoliberal globalism: rebuilding local economies hollowed out by globalism, issuing local currencies that connect production and consumption, privileging the consumption of local and regional resources over distant, and more exploitative relationships.[7] One prominent example within the 'building alternatives' stream of activism is the fair-trade movement, a reaction against the inequalities produced by the dominant capitalist trading system of 'free' trade. Fair-trade attempts to build an alternative to global capitalist system of trade, promoting exchange motivated primarily by mutual respect and co-operation rather than the profit motive. Rather than searching for the cheapest price possible to maximise the company's 'bottom line', trade is organised around a 'fair price', often defined as a price that provides a living wage for producers. Fair trade organisations usually also commit to purchasing directly from small producers, providing access to credit and technical assistance, encouraging sustainable environmental practices, establishing long-term relationships with producers based on mutual respect, and supporting democratically run workers' co-operatives. In short, fair-trade advocates attempt to build more equitable networks of North-South exchange that are more sustainable and democratic.

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[7] While no definitive listing of alternatives to globalism exists, for an excellent survey of 'local' alternatives in the context of globalisation processes, see Schuman (2000). For a

Fair trade is often criticised for not being a panacea for the problems of underdevelopment. Director of Global Exchange, Ted Lewis believes that fair-trade does "help people assuage their conscience", but "to think that it will somehow resolve structural problems and structural inequalities is fuzzy thinking".[8] Socially responsible trade accounts for approximately one-hundredth of one percent of the $20 trillion sales garnered by the estimated 80 million to 100 million enterprises world-wide. Although 30% of US consumers say they will pay extra to ensure that the product was produced under fair conditions, market research suggests that only 5% will actually do so, and only with assurance that certain quality and convenience conditions are met (Thomson, 1999).

Indeed, it would be foolish to present fair-trade as a panacea, or a sufficient base of practical resistance to corporate globalisation. Paul Hawken writes: "If every

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prominent, and exciting defence of national 'alternatives' in the face of globalism, see the Council of Canadians' numerous publications and press statements (www.canadians.org).

[8] Interview with author, January 12, 2001. San Cristobal, Chiapas. Mexico.

company on the planet were to adopt the environmental and social practices of the best companies – of say, the Body Shop, Patagonia, and Ben and Jerry's – the world would still be moving toward environmental degradation and collapse (ibid.). While these criticisms of fair trade are certainly valid, what such critiques frequently obscure is the potential of fair trade as a *partial alternative*, as one weapon in a larger arsenal of alternatives. When each strategy is approached in this pessimistic fashion, the fatalism of neo-liberal globalist ideologies is fostered. There are no viable alternatives! Resignation sets in, and frustrated elite commentators remain in the comfort zone of passivity, sustaining their role as a detached critic until the perfect theoretical alternative to capitalism can be developed.

From the privileged vantage point of academic life, it is easy to forget that globalisation is not just a theoretical problem, but is a series of processes exacerbating pressing human needs that must be addressed with pragmatic solutions. Academics may forget to inquire about what is being done to address the vagaries of capitalism in the here and now. Even more seriously, a purely theoretical knowledge about global inequality leads to resignation. If education only includes information about the structural tendencies of globalisation and their devastating impact, people become frustrated and disempowered. Fair-trade offers a partial, but important answer to the question so often heard in public forums, 'what can I do?'.

Fair-trade is one example of a partial, but pragmatic solution, emerging as a strategy to link everyday shopping habits with structures of North-South inequality. By focussing on the urgent imperative to redistribute wealth between the North and the South, it addresses a problem often forgotten by the localist focus of environmentalists in the wealthy North (Hudson, 1998). In addition, fair-trade strategies often provide a higher standard of living for those involved in subsistence production, particularly coffee. During fieldwork conducted in winter 2001, I observed *campesinos* in the Southern Mexican state of Chiapas earning only six pesos per kilo of coffee – the lowest price for twenty years, leading some farmers to leave crops unharvested in the field. The price for fair-trade coffee, on the other hand, hovered around fifteen pesos. This was obviously not enough to make coffee producers members of the Mexican middle-class, but was more reflective of the labour-intensive nature of production, and closer to the notion of a living wage.

At the same time fair-trade works to redistribute wealth (albeit in a limited, small-scale way), there is the need for strategic reflection, as with other resistance strategies against neo-liberal globalism. The search for truth, or what Freire calls 'true words', requires active efforts to balance the demands of activism and reflection. While academic detachment tends to destroy hope, 'mindless' activism without a theoretical rooting can also gain a dangerous momentum. Unreflective fair-trade practices can be highly superficial, easily reduced to a wishy-washy lifestyle politics. Buying products to express a subversive political identity, or make a statement against industrial society is not a new phenomenon, and can be readily coopted into a larger corporate discourse that absorbs critical elements of sub-cultures (Frank, 1997). Fair trade discourse also tends to rely on individualistic notions of choice and consumer sovereignty, obscuring the structural linkages between core and periphery in a globalised economy, and belying the collective environmental implications of individual free choice in the marketplace (See Chapter Seven). In other words, having a beautiful batik table doesn't necessitate knowledge of the labour processes that brought it into your home, or of the other aspects of your life that sustain global inequality and unsustainable consumption habits. Like any other strategy, fair-trade is a partial component of an anti-corporate praxis, but not sufficient in itself.

ii. Between 'is' and 'ought': working with generative themes

☙ Besides the epistemological dialogue between action and reflection, I identify a second normative dialogue between the 'is', and the 'ought'. Again the Freirean reference point provides invaluable lessons for the study of globalisation. These are difficult lessons, however, given the reluctance of most academics – even left academics – to engage with normative concerns. Cornel West, strongly criticises the "faltering and neglected utopian dimension of leftist theory and praxis", writing:

> To be a person of the left is not only to envision and fight for a radically free and democratic society; it is to see this society-in-the-making as manifest in the abilities and capacities of flesh-and-blood people in their

> struggles under conflictual and contradictory socio-economic conditions not of their own choosing (1985, 31).

Effective resistance to neo-liberal globalism requires that we are critical about the oppression brought on by corporate globalism, at the same time we have the courage to resist the detached nonchalance of 'cool', and speak openly about alternative norms, ways of living, and hopes for the future.

Freire's dialogue between 'is' and 'ought' owes a great deal to the work of Ernst Bloch – a central figure in the contemporary re-examination of utopia. Bloch examined the idea of a utopian imagination based on a dialectic between the subjective possibilities ('subjective potency'), and the real, objective possibilities latent in nature and history ('objective potency') (1986). For Bloch, to have hope means to be actively involved in "what is becoming", rather than passively accepting "what is" (1986, 3). Utopia is seen neither as an impossible ideal, nor something inevitable. It is instead viewed as a series of historical possibilities grounded in concrete experiences and dialectically interwoven between subjective and objective forces (1986). Utopia is not about a naive pie-in-the-sky vision. Instead, normative aspirations must be balanced with empirical realities. In Freirean terms, this necessitates a constant dialogue between utopian goals, and the structures and possibilities at hand (Freire 1970, 72). Because of this dialogue, the Freirean vision of emancipation avoids becoming an abstract construct that can never be realised. Current realities are viewed as "limiting situations" that can be transformed, not as a "closed world from which there is no exit" (1970, 31).

Freedom is not a final end-state or gift, but rather a struggle, which must be pursued “constantly and responsibly” (1970, 29).

The Freirean utopia is thus not an unrealisable goal, but a product of concrete struggle and suffering. Freire’s literacy programs provide a tangible example of this dialectical struggle. The realities of domination are investigated in the classroom using *generative themes*, which involve inquiry into topics deemed of importance and existential relevance to students (Freire 1970, 84). Generative themes are not fixed and final goals, but normative jumping-off points that in turn create new norms, and new visions of emancipatory social action. They are generative because they “contain the possibility of unfolding into again as many themes, which in their turn call for new tasks to be fulfilled” (1970, 83). Generative themes exist alongside their dialectical opposites: machismo alongside feminism, dependency alongside sovereignty, domination alongside liberation. These themes are not monolithic constructs, but are located in concentric circles that expand from the particular to the universal, crossing multiple sectors as they expand. At the outermost point of the circle we find the theme of domination, and its (dialectical) corresponding opposite, liberation (1970, 84). Through a Freirean process of literacy training, the generative themes most relevant to the students are decoded, and the workings of oppressive power structures are exposed (1970, 86-89). This process targets the passivity of the oppressed, allowing them escape the crushing inevitability of what is, and begin to dream of what alternative normative structures ought to be.

Although originally oriented towards literacy training, the process of decoding generative themes also occurs within the broader process of social movement mobilisation. Generative themes identify obstacles to humanisation, at the same time, they are the foundations for transformative understanding – for moving from the 'is' towards the 'ought'. Deborah Barndt's research on tomatoes in global food chains is an instructive example of how these generative themes can be effectively linked to globalisation research. Her research traced the pathways of a humble tomato along the transnational food chain – a multi-year project that is closely linked to Freirean idea of coding and decoding generative themes in order to broaden resistance (1999, 1998). In her own words:

> By focusing on the journey of the tomato from the Mexican field to the Canadian fast-food restaurant, I am using this fruit of the earth as a "code of globalization" to be decoded (deconstructed) in terms of the various issues it re-presents: from seeds and intellectual property rights to questions of monocultural production and agro-export economies, from the use of agrochemicals and the degradation of the environment to the promotion and consumption of hyperreal food whose history is totally obscured from those who imbibe it (1998).

By focussing on the tomato, Barndt provides a reference point that connects the existential experiences of everyday life (e.g. eating a tomato on a fast food burger), to the complex structural conditions of globalisation. Barndt's work suggests the utility of drawing on Freire to creatively engage with experiences of globalisation, and combat the reification of these processes as unstoppable, and inevitable. As the factory tomato passes along the production line, globalisation processes becomes increasingly transparent; the citizen/reader is shown how globalisation is a living, breathing phenomenon constructed by human energies. At this point, the utopian possibilities of a home-grown tomato, or a local farmers' market tomato are thrown into a larger political context connecting the 'is' and the 'ought' in a small, but meaningful way.

While Barndt's example is both illustrative and inspirational for globalisation researchers, the search for generative themes can also be observed outside academic writings. Barndt demonstrates the importance of embedding the globalisation research process in concrete actors and experiences of neo-liberal globalism, closely observing the social norms arising from the process of contestation. A cursory listing of relevant generative themes in resistance to neo-liberal globalist enclosure might include the following: chemical versus organic food sources, sovereign democratic control versus corporate control over resources, citizenship identities versus consumer identities, and top-down elite democracy versus human rights and substantive popular democracy. While such a provisional listing opens up more questions than its answers, it suggests that generative themes can only be transformative if they move beyond oppositionalism to assert alternative norms and structures. While critiques remain important, it is not sufficient to simply decode power structures. A great danger for movements contesting corporate globalism is monological thinking, where generative themes become one-sided, focussed exclusively on domination, and not on the opposite pole of liberation and liberatory alternatives. But without the second half of the dialectic, activist groups run the risk of becoming locked into oppositionalism.

The tendency towards oppositionalism is especially problematic for movements challenging corporate globalisation, where structures may appear so unassailable and all- encompassing, that resistance seems futile, and alternatives unrealistic. Simply asserting the right to say 'no' is itself a vitally important step to take. It can also be highly effective in solidifying contestation, and unifying widely diverging coalition partners. But cross-movement and cross-national alliances can easily become dependent on oppositional approaches. These actors may then demonstrate traits of defensive conservatism; without a vision of the future, the temptation is to unreflexively turn the past, or 'tradition' into the normative end point. Normative visions, as Freire notes, cannot be parachuted in from above, but must emerge from the logic of social action. They must evolve from the process of translating the pain of marginalisation into the hope for transformation. Only when these alternative norms and visions emerge can the movement shift from an oppositional to a generative logic – where words like democracy and citizenship are not empty monikers, but short-hand expressions for substantive programs of reform and lived experience.

Instructive lessons in the tensions underlying this dialogue between 'is' and 'ought' can be more concretely observed within the battle against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), an agreement born in the OECD that attempted to deregulate investment flows, achieve a global 'free' flow of capital, and provide legal armaments to enable corporations to discipline uncooperative governments. In this case we see that on the ground, shifting from the 'is' to the 'ought' does not operate as two separate and discrete processes. There is no simple progression from what is, to the utopia of what out to be. Instead, we find pressures for and against the process of constructive alternative visions.

The utopian neo-liberal vision of the MAI was opposed by a coalition of social movements that claimed that the agreement was thinly veiled charter of rights for corporations. After applying intense pressure on national governments, the proposal was successfully defeated in 1998 when France pulled out of the negotiations at the OECD. Within the anti-MAI movement, unity was constructed on the basis that the MAI involved an unacceptable strengthening of corporate power that threatened national sovereignty and popular control of resources (Goodman and Ranald 2000).

The anti-MAI campaign posed a normative challenge to corporate globalisation, and gave rise to powerful generative themes, especially surrounding the need to counter corporate control of economic processes with democratic citizen control. Processes of contesting the MAI gave rise to boisterous discussions about what could, or would operate as suitable replacement to corporate charters. In particular, questions arose about whether alternative notions of economic sovereignty operate most soundly on the national level, or whether citizens' rights agreements should be constructed transnationally. While these questions were never fully resolved, and a tendency towards oppositionalism remains a constant within resistance to corporate rights agreements, what remained important was the birth of a public forum on these issues. Rather than see the lack of consensus as a failing, it can be viewed as an important corrective, preventing the imposition of fixed agendas and structures, maintaining an open dialogue across positions, and allowing generative themes to continually expand. Such radical openness reflects Freire's insistence that what is important is the process of struggling towards emancipation. The key is active engagement in the process of realising future freedom, a process of struggle that connects that 'is' and the 'ought'. This requires not just imagination, but tactics, knowledge of the current society, and awareness of the need for inner change within human minds and hearts. Above all, it requires hope – hope that what is, is not necessarily what will always be.

iii. Between objectivity and subjectivity: conscientization

> The world is today either natural or
> social; tomorrow it will be both, and shall
> be looked at as if it were a text or a
> place, a stage or an autobiography.
> -Santos (1995, 36).

> We didn't look at the world through a
> news-wire but through a novel, an essay
> or a poem. That made us very different.
> -Subcomandante Marcos

☙ Given the reliance of social sciences in general (and globalisation research in particular) on detached, 'objective' representations of globalisation, it seems particularly difficult to introduce and legitimise personal, subjective experiences of neo-liberal globalism and its challengers. The Freirean dialogical approach offers guidance, demanding an embrace of both objective and subjective tools of analysis. According to Freire, there can be no possible choice between subjective or objective knowledge. He insists that dialogue between objectivity and subjectivity is not simply an interpretive method, but an essential characteristic of the epistemological relationship, indispensable to knowing and learning (Freire 1970, 51). To deny subjective knowledge is to create a "world without people", while a purely subjective approach to knowledge creates "people without a world", a solipsistic position where nothing exists beyond consciousness (Freire 1970, 32).

Of course it is no secret that the current post-modern theoretical climate creates deep scepticism about the notion of a solid reality 'out there'. Social-theoretic accounts of globalisation often contain minimal references to the material world, the biosphere, or physical suffering endured under late capitalism.[9] At the same time, hard-nosed accounts of political-economic globalisation trends pay little attention to subjective accounts of cultural exchanges or the personal dimensions of globalist exploitation. The left continues to alienate potential supporters using reams of economic data, and a depressing inability to connect with the fears and hopes of its traditional working class constituencies.

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[9] This tension is replicated in the debates between bio-centric deep ecology, and social constructionism. See Smith (2001).

While we should certainly be suspicious of crude realistic approaches to question of ontological 'truth', a Freirean methodology has decidedly complex relationship to 'reality'. It is not given or static, but rather, a "problem to be worked on" (Schaull 1970, 14). There is no assumption that theoretical concepts will correspond exactly to actual phenomena, although to deny any relationship between epistemological concepts and an ontological reality would be both foolish, and elitist (Olson 1992, 7; Freire & Macedo 1995, 386). As Macedo argues "those who materially experience oppression have little difficulty identifying their oppressors", whereas those who adopt "a relativistic posture concerning the oppressed and the oppressor" may unwittingly enable the intellectualization and abstraction of real problems (Freire & Macedo 1995, 387).

For Freire, as for many feminist methodologies, the process of knowledge creation involves rational thoughts and experiences as well as emotions – a potent source of knowledge and a key to discovering deeper truths (Weiler 1991, 463). Nonetheless, the lived experiences of the oppressed are not a perfect source of knowledge, and require a dialectical complement (Freire & Macedo 1995, 385). Unlike ethnomethodological approaches, Freire does not rely on experience as a pure knowledge source, but believes it should be problematized. This means that globalisation studies should not, and cannot choose between inductive experience and deductive cognition. While subjective accounts are important complements to more traditional economistic accounts of globalism, they should not be seen as unequivocal substitutes for political-economic analysis of capitalist structures. It is only by engaging "subjectivity and objectivity in constant dialectical relationship", that the theory latent within experience is drawn out and can be used in the production of new knowledge (Freire 1970, 32; O'Cadiz & Torres 1994, 220).

The dialogue between situated subjective experience and objective knowledge occurs through a process of *conscientização* (conscientization) (Freire 1970, 49). Conscientization is not simply an academic method, but serves more broadly as a methodology articulating a relationship between understanding and social change. It refers to a process of abandoning a passive outlook towards the world, where people begin to understand possibilities for resistance and change. The critical starting point is not an abstract idea, but giving validation to a person's subjective understanding of the world (Freire 1970, 17;Torres 1994a, 439). Ironically, it is only through an intimate phenomenological engagement that people can come to develop greater consciousness of distant, 'objective' forces of oppression.

Conscientization is embedded in the potential to become more fully human, and according to Freire, is not simply one mode of interpretation, but is the fundamental method of human understanding (Freire 1970, 51). The process of conscientization begins with *prise de conscience*, a French term Freire uses to refer to the taking consciousness – developing a capacity to analyse and read the world (Torres 1994a, 430; Weiler 1991, 463). This is the starting point of dialogue: the "present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people" (Freire, 1970, 76). Generative themes are then used to encourage people to make connections between their everyday lives and forces that structure, constrain, and enable existential experience (1970, 85). During conscientization a shift occurs from naïve consciousness to critical consciousness. Naive consciousness is characterised by passivity, resignation, and a static worldview, whereas critical consciousness allows the oppressed to view themselves as subjects of a historical process and agents of collective action, not simply as inert victims (1970, 73).

The methodology of conscientization draws our attention towards the dynamic relationship between emancipatory action and knowledge. We can then see the potential in social movements contesting corporate globalism – not just as elite propaganda machines railing against corporate power, but as agents of conscientization and creators of new knowledge about neo-liberal globalism. The methodology is potentially radical, because it disrupts the privilege of academics as exclusive arbiters, or holders of knowledge, and challenges a Leninist model of revolutionary change – a model that is painfully inadequate to challenge the multiple, capillary sources of power under global capitalism.[10] Instead of attempting to save 'the people', meaningful change is seen to occur through a process of conscientization that empowers individuals to actively critique oppressive, undemocratic concentrations of power, as well as participate in the construction of alternatives.

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[10] This is a factor well understood by anarchist 'anti-globalisation' activists in the North who refuse hierarchical organisation and top-down leadership. What seems less appreciated is the importance of rigorous analytic tools and logic necessary to unveil

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) provides an important example of how this process of conscientization can work in the South, and the obstacles that such a bottom-up methodology of knowledge and action inevitably faces. A Freirean perspective allows us to see the Zapatistas as engaged in an active process of conscientization and knowledge creation, and not simply providing a fixed set of programs or electoral platforms. This is a movement that has created new knowledge through the process of struggle. More amazing than their ability to simply survive 'low intensity' warfare conducted by the Mexican state, has been the continuation of an open-ended and multifaceted process of conscientization where understanding of oppression on multiple levels has evolved through struggle.

The Zapatistas' analysis of globalisation and critiques of neo-liberalism have always been an explicit part of their armed pedagogy (Johnston, 2000). What is less obvious is how a methodology of conscientization made such a striking critique possible at the grassroots. According to most accounts, the formation of the Zapatistas did not involve an indoctrination program whereby ignorant

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structures of capitalism, and the importance of democratically redeeming (rather than dismissing) structures of administration, politics, and science. See Laibman (2001/2).

peasants were educated by knowledgeable outsiders about political and economic truths (Ross, 1995; Harvey 1998). Instead, the decision to form the EZLN was based on a "prise de conscience" of the immediate experience of exploitation. It was based on a need for self-defence against the violence of landowner paramilitary squads, and the ravages of hunger and disease on landless and land-poor peoples. The decision to rise in arms on January 1st 1994 was based on the belief that neo-liberal policies like NAFTA (and the associated barrage of cheap corn imports from the United States) would make survival for small-scale indigenous campesinos next to impossible. Subcomandante Marcos has frequently mentioned the dialogical process by which the movement formed; through his time spent with communities in the Lacandón jungle, he learned to not just speak, but to truly listen (Marcos, 2001). Through this dialogue, new knowledge and organising strategies were created. Marcos began to think differently about the role of revolutionary leadership, and indigenous campesinos began to think differently about themselves and their place in Mexican society.[11]

Underlying processes of conscientization in Zapatista communities did not arise spontaneously, but were linked to practices of liberation theology that encouraged people to independently develop their own personalized understanding of spirituality and social justice. Although Zapatistas communities do not endorse any religious direction, liberation theology has clearly influenced the conscientization processes involved in building Zapatismo. One *campamentista*

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[11] Marcos' account of the formation of the EZLN is confirmed by different accounts

(human rights observer) writes about what she found while living within a Zapatista community:

> There is a small wooden church where they have *platica* (talk) three times a week. They are Catholic but it is a type of Catholicism I have never seen before. It was very empowering and inspirational. There was no priest, just the men playing guitars and a few people to read verses. One of their hymns were called, "When the poor believe in the poor". After the verses had been read the person facilitating invited each person individually to speak. It was amazing how people interpreted the text.[12]

Through processes of conscientization, awareness of oppression has deepened and broadened to expose other forms of violence, such as violence against indigenous women. Because of the great focus on subcomandante Marcos, both internationally and within Mexico, there has been a tendency to ignore the complex identity of Zapatistas, obscuring conflicts along multiple axes such as gender. Yet women in the EZLN have always been in a contradictory position, fighting alongside men, but fighting oppressive behaviour from these same men. The Zapatista movement initiated processes of conscientization that opened up a space to explore gender exploitation, and allowed for a more nuanced understanding of oppression to emerge in the communities.

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documenting this dialogical process. See Ross (2000a; 1995), and Harvey (1998).

[12] Personal e-mail communication with Serra Benson. March 15th, 2001.

Of course, it is obvious that patriarchy has hardly been eliminated in Zapatista communities. The methodology of conscientization is always impartial, ongoing, and incomplete. Within the Zapatista communities, gender inequities remain along lines of language (many indigenous women cannot speak Spanish), and education (girls continue to receive less education than boys). A long-standing tradition of male leadership (*caudillismo*) continues, and with the encouragement of the foreign press, is often focussed on Subcomandante Marcos. Even with these limitations, this conscientization process has changed the consciousness of both men and women towards the dynamic of gender.[13] Some members of the EZLN report that the first revolution occurred in March of 1993, when the EZLN formulated the women's revolutionary laws (EZLN, 1995, 97). Contrary to the machismo of most Latin American military movements, the Zapatista movement has women on its top military council, women's contributions to family and the community are more visible, and women heroines, such as Comandante Ramona, have emerged. Major Ana María describes the changing consciousness about the many roles of women:

> They [the rest of the EZLN] saw that I was a woman, and they saw that women can also do things. That women can organize themselves, and that they can do things other than what they do in their houses and their homes. Women have the capability of doing other kinds of work as well. And then

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[13] This brief accounting of gender conscientization cannot do justice to the complexity and contradictions of gender relations within Zapatista communities. For accounts of the rise of indigenous feminism and the contradictions within the Zapatista movement, see Castillo (2002), Belausteguigoitia (2000), and Stephens (1997). For a multi-media web forum documenting various dimensions of gender struggles in Chiapas, see Mujeres Zapatistas (www.actlab.utexas.edu/~geneve/zapwomen/).

> women started to enter into the Army. Women started to get together and organize themselves, and they started to join the ranks of the Army. And then other women did not join, but organized themselves into women's groups, women alone. They organized themselves. But before, this did not exist. Because people always thought that women couldn't do anything (Zapatistas! 1995, ch.8 p.227.)

This conscientization process has not been limited to gender. Through many years of organisation and resistance, Zapatista *campesinos* gained a generalised consciousness of oppression and hierarchical power structures, and through those organisational efforts – which included not just the initial uprising, but also the subsequent marches, dialogues, national consultations, international encounters, and other interactions with Mexican civil society – they defied the stereotype of indigenous campesinos as passive, and unorganised. Out of the Zapatista movement was born a National Indigenous Congress (Congreso Nacional Indígena, CNI) which represents indigenous people nationally and lobbies for the fulfilment of the San Andrés Accords.[14] In Freire's words, "[I]t is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organised struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves" (1970, 47).

Besides catalysing a change in consciousness within indigenous communities, the Zapatista movement has also catalysed a national-level process of conscientization concerning indigenous rights, and the impact of neo-liberalism on Mexico's indigenous people and small-scale farmers. The EZLN uprising enabled the awakening of a local democratic spirit, and the coming together of civil society in Mexico – events that have undoubtedly produced irrevocable changes in Mexican political structures (Gilbreth and Otero, 2001). The Zapatistas have also prompted a global series of organising efforts and conferences against neo-liberalism, and are credited for inspiring recent waves of anti-globalisation protests. While the notion of an international cabal of Zapatista activists should not be exaggerated, participants in the Zapatismo solidarity network widely credit the indigenous rebel group with renewing energy for the struggle against the forces of global capital. Harry Cleaver describes it this way:

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[14] The official web-site for the CNI can be found at http://www.laneta.apc.org/cni/

> The demonstrations in Prague [against the joint meeting of the World Bank and IMF] are the offspring of a process of global activism that began at the First Intercontinental Encounter in Chiapas in the summer of 1996. A second Intercontinental followed in Spain in 1997. Then came the mobilization against the WTO in Geneva, then the one in Seattle, then Washington, Davos and now Prague. It was the Zapatista call for global grassroots mobilization for the First Intercontinental that set the current worldwide level of activism in motion. [15]

While these transnational connections should not be overstated (See Chapter Six), a transnational methodology of conscientization and resistance to neo-liberal globalism have made important connections to the Zapatista movement, and those connections have in some instances, transcended difficult boundaries of language, nationality, and ethnicity. What is critical to note is that wakening consciousness about neo-liberal globalism could not have occurred simply through the dissemination of abstract theories of economic exploitation. These theories have existed for many years, and still many people accepted the fatalist TINA ideology. Anti-globalisation activism – whether it is in Prague, Chiapas, or Seattle – only occurs when there was a spark of connection between personal, subjective feelings of alienation, and an understanding of more objective accounts of capitalist structures. Zapatista communiques gave voice to the experiences of the marginalised, inspiring readers throughout the world. These personal narratives, in turn, have dialectically enriched understanding of global capitalist structures, providing ammunition to its discontents. These experiences lend credence to Santos' claim that in the "emergent paradigm, the autobiographical character of emancipatory knowledge is fully claimed: an understanding, intimate knowledge that does not separate us from, but rather, connects us personally with whatever we study" (1995, 29-30).

iv. Between structure and agency: from banking to dialogue

> Those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly. . . To affirm this commitment but to consider oneself the proprietor of revolutionary wisdom – which must then be given to

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[15] Harry Cleaver. 2000. "En;Jornada,J.Aviles,Prague:Marcos. Victory,Sep 30', October 1st, 2000. Email Listserv Chiapas95-English.

> (or imposed on) the people – is to retain the old ways. The man or woman who proclaims devotion to the cause of liberation yet is unable to enter into communion with the people, who he or she continues to regard as totally ignorant, is grievously self-deceived.
>
> -Freire (1970, 42-43)

☙ A final important question for globalisation research is how to address the sticky structure versus agency debate. This is not just a theoretical question, but goes directly to the core of the challenge for globalisation researchers and activists: *where do we go from here*? How do we document and analyse the structures of neo-liberal globalism without encouraging further fatalism? How do we reconcile this with a desire to produce hope for transformative action within and against these structures?

Again, Freire is a source of inspiration. Clearly, Freire is not associated with the 'death of the subject', nor does he sit with the economic determinist camps of some strands of Western Marxism. Agency is crucial to Freire's vision of emancipation: “the crucial idea is that humans create their humanity – they become human – in the very process of intervening in reality in order to change it” (Peters & Lankshear 1994, 177-178). Emancipation hinges on informed or reflective agency, grounded in a healthy respect for the power and endurance of socio-political economic structures.

But how does Freirean subjectivity relate to the world of structures? As in all of the other categories of analysis, the concept of dialogue is critical. Freire's theory of action starts from a point of dialectical unity between structure and agency (1970, 20). Freire writes that the "world and human beings do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction" (1970, 32). Social agents are constrained by structures, but social structures are socially constituted, which makes change possible (Torres 1994a, 443). Freire sees humans as active and capable of transforming structures. He writes: "if humankind produces social reality... then transforming that reality is a historical task, a task for humanity" (1970, 33). Freire sees history not as determined, but as a framework of possibilities and boundaries in which struggles for emancipation occur (Freire & Macedo 1995, 397). Agency is limited by structure and textured by historicity, but it is not occluded (Freire, 1970, 66).

Critical globalisation theory must construct a balance between hope and fatalism, and this involves a direct engagement with the structure/agency dialectic. Such a project must avoid the traditionally weak Marxist conception of the subject, take agency seriously, yet not obscure the structural dimension of neo-liberal globalism. Without analysis of the structures of neo-liberal economics and the role of state and international institutions, we veer towards voluntarism. Structural analysis is necessary to highlight contradictions that social movements can exploit. Yet political-economic analysis divorced from movement politics and lacking an understanding of transformative possibilities is complicit with the fatalism of neo-liberal ideology. Discrediting the importance of agency and bowing down to the power of structural constraints offers no alternative –

politically, analytically, or morally. Denying the role of movements acting against the seemingly unshakeable forces of neo-liberal globalism not only writes off the possibilities for change, but denies the dialectical logic of capitalist development. The process of overcoming barriers to accumulation always shapes the trajectory of capitalist development, and shapes the logic of capital itself. Barriers to accumulation are generated by the system – by its own internal contradictions – and are expressed in intermittent waves of resistance movements.

But a theoretical understanding of contradiction is not enough. Emancipatory research requires more than knowledge of the structure/agency dialogue (Freire 1970, 31). Freire employs the logic of Hegelian dialectics, but does not accept that intellectual enquiry is a sufficient condition for social struggle. The dialogue between structure and agency must be embedded in emancipatory actions, and this transformation requires active participation in social, material, and political struggles. Problems arise, however, since it is not always clear what type of agency is possible, or appropriate. This brings us more directly to the issue of transformative knowledge production and the necessary requirements for emancipatory globalisation research. What kind of interventions should researchers be involved in? Where would they occur? What coalition partners are acceptable? In short, this opens up a Pandora's box on the general topic of activism and social transformation.

One way to focus this challenge is to examine sources of knowledge outside the academy – knowledge production located within movements, or more specifically, within networks of activists. Autonomous research centres (e.g., Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, CCPA) that produce research for campaign organisations occupy a strategic position – a critically positioned bridge midway between academia and activism. Their work can be politically engaged, but also conceptually incisive, empirically grounded and methodologically rigorous. Participating organisations benefit greatly from sharing perspectives and strategies that allow them to contextualize research and activist experiences.

This type of dialogical process sharply contrasts with the type of explicit detachment found in the social sciences, or globalisation studies more specifically. These traditions are based on modern science, where the element of dialogue is kept at a minimum; there is interaction with the 'audience' only to the extent it is necessary to convince them of the truthfulness of the expert's argument (Santos 1995, 45). Within social movement research networks like the CCPA, the expert/audience dualism is frequently broken down. This type of social movement knowledge subverts the limited view of knowledge as regulatory, and order-enforcing so commonly found in mainstream globalisation analysis. The persistence of this dualism leads Santos to argue for a new type of rhetoric, where dialogue becomes the "regulative principle of argumentative practice", and where knowledge production occurs throughout speaker and audience, so that ultimately, "whoever starts as a speaker may well end as an audience and the direction of conviction is reversible" (1995, 45).

Besides these fundamental philosophical divides which minimize dialogue in globalisation research, institutional divisions separate political-economy researchers preoccupied with structure, and social movement activists focused on maximising agency. The institutional logic of the (especially Northern) academy is often defined against close engagement with social movements. Scholars may intend to maintain close involvement with activists, but find this to be a burden, or irrelevant to the institutional life and reward structure of universities and academic associations. Some universities may actively discourage or even penalise academics for involvement in social movements – a problem that is becoming particularly prevalent as competition between universities intensifies and administrations impose tighter restrictions on academic activity (Yates, 2000).

Even if academics overcome these obstacles, they will also encounter deep cultural barriers. Assumptions about knowledge creation in the academy – the set of conventions that constitute academic discourse – are often entirely alien to social movements. Issues of language-use worsen problems of detachment, namely the academic preference for the obscure or esoteric over the everyday or practical. There are also issues of process that heighten detachment. Academics are accustomed to individualised research processes where findings are presented and defended by solitary individuals, rather than a more dialogic process where issues are raised and discussed within affected communities.

In contrast to the pressures faced by academics in their university hermitry, the institutional context for activists is often crisis-driven, moving from one 'fire' to another. Tremendous energy is directed at financial survival, leaving little resources for data collection, pedagogy, or self-reflection. Financial dependence – on a particular membership base, on a foundation, or on a government agency – can determine the policy stance of an organisation, and even its internal structures. To deal with this insecurity, and maintain a stable and predictable profile, activist organisations can become highly professionalised. The alternative to professionalism is a reliance on inspiration and volunteers – a strategy only sustainable where there is a sufficient strength of purpose.

These diverging tendencies – for academic researchers and for activists – are greatly accentuated where the focus is on corporate globalisation, and where the distance between a Northern university and a Southern sweatshop organizer are overwhelming. The ultra-macro scope of academic debates on globalisation, and their distance from everyday life, diminishes possibilities for engaged discussion. Researching globalisation tends to encourage academic cosmopolitanism, often with an elitist preference for participation in closed international colloquia rather than open-access rallies or conferences (see Chapter Six). Besides the problem of anti-intellectualism in activist circles, campaigners against neo-liberal globalisation can develop their own form of elitism, spending more time in airport lounges than on street protests. Activist organisations campaigning on globalisation can become dependent on international sources of finance, subject to co-optation and self-serving globalist 'NGOism'. Without a firm foundation in local resistance, organisations can be more bound into the epistemic communities created by transnational corporations and intergovernmental agencies than the communities they claim to represent. In this context it becomes imperative to deliberately create embedded interactions between the structural analysts studying globalisation, and the activism organized against corporate globalism. Transformative effects are only likely if analysis can be developed and brought to bear on specific sites of mobilisation and critique.

Friere's conceptualisation of dialogic knowledge creation offers insights into the challenge of grounding strategies in a dialogue between structure and agency, avoiding the two-sided coin of fatalism and naïveté. Freire contrasts a "banking model" of education with a "problem solving" model (1970, 54). In a banking model the omnipotent researcher assumes they have all of the answers – knowledge becomes "a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (1970, 53). Banking education does nothing to discourage passivity, or encourage active human intervention on social structures (1970, 54-5). Examples of banking education abound, but one particularly salient case for globalisation researchers is the closed-door conference model. There is clearly a need to preserve intellectual integrity and hold back the neo-liberal push to turn universities into 'hands-on' training centres for corporate interests. At the same time, globalisation researchers often seem defensive about their removal from 'outsiders' – people that could clutter discussions, ask difficult questions, and generally slow down the process of knowledge creation.

In contrast, a dialogical, problem-solving model of emancipatory knowledge depicts the research process as fundamentally engaged in dialogue with activists. This is not a token gesture of kindness or charity, but is based on the belief that knowledge and resistance to globalisation are only possible through joint research or "co-investigation" (see Freire 1970, 60-61). For Freire, emancipatory research cannot happen in isolation: "the investigators and the people (who would normally be considered objects of that investigation) should act as co-investigators" (1970, 87). As with generative themes, dialogical education allows the research process to constantly renew itself as part of the broader and unremitting process of emancipation.

Academics have often sought out linkages with activists, and created institutions to express this. In the current neo-liberal era, many universities have become more focused on "income generation", viewing "internationalisation" as a cash cow. Far from critiquing the cultural, corporate and governmental agents of neo-liberal globalism, many Northern universities have become key beneficiaries and drivers of the process – key players in a mindset that views knowledge of globalisation in the terms of social regulation rather than emancipation. Ties with corporate funding bodies only worsen this trend. No wonder, then, that many social movement activists view universities – especially university administrations – as part of the problem, not part of the solution. Nonetheless, in many senses, these constraints have always existed, and counter-hegemonic possibilities and demands for intellectual freedom have always been constructed against the dominant logic of revenue maximization found in large institutional structures like universities. Open-eyed understanding and debate of these trends are critical, but so also is a vision of possibilities.

Such a vision does surface, sometimes with remarkable results. An example from an open door, citizen-activist conference at the Parkland Institute – in the ultra-conservative heartland of Alberta, Canada – makes the point more concretely. The Parkland Institute is a semi-autonomous political-economy research centre housed at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. The Institute was founded in 1996, and held its first conference shortly afterward in 1997 on the theme of Corporatism, Democracy and Globalisation. The conference followed the conventional academic conference format (e.g. issuing a general call for papers, expert panels), with the exception of encouraging attendance from members of the public, and Parkland supporters: union officials and activists, health-care workers, teachers, activist farmers, students, seniors and so forth. The results were mixed. Some presenters were not used to having to debate the practical applications of their ideas. The question of strategy and social action was raised repeatedly by the audience (e.g. 'but what do we do?'), often to the blank stares of academic presenters. The audience expressed sentiments ranging from annoyance to downright betrayal.

These types of conflicts could have led the organisers and the Institute to follow a closed-door academic conference model (keeping out difficult questions and impatient conference participants), but it didn't. Instead, they committed themselves to following the learning curve of dialogue between academics, activists, and the general public. Future conference topics were deliberately geared away from overly academic themes, and towards problems identified as important by community activists involved in the Institute: poverty, health-care, corporate power and the MAI, challenging the privatisation of knowledge, and practical plans for building a post-corporate society. Conference planning committees – made up of academics and community activists – have maintained an emphasis on creating excitement, dialogue, and debate through the conferences. Enhancing academic reputations is not a priority. Social activities like musical evenings, dances (including a "gala against global greed"), pub nights, and coffee-houses are planned to encourage interaction between speakers and the conference participants. Participants are not 'empty' vessels needing to be filled with knowledge, but are often experts in their field on the topics at hand: as health-care workers dealing with cutbacks, teachers in over-crowded schools, and union workers fighting for labour protection.

This learning curve is far from complete, and problems with the open-door citizen conference persist. There are debates over appropriate fee structures (e.g. how to make the conferences both accessible, and financially viable). There are financial stresses associated with the high costs of big-name American speakers that some feel are necessary to draw a crowd. It is still difficult to convince academic presenters to make connections between academic analysis and social transformation. There are also the risks associated with getting directly involved in the Albertan political climate (e.g. direct attacks on the Parkland Institute from the Premier, Ralph Klein, on more than one occasion), and multiple reminders that the dialogue process is not always peaceful or easy.[16] Even so, the shift away from a banking model, and towards a problem-solving model of knowledge creation has been encouraging. Parkland conferences have shown academics that involvement with 'outsiders' is not a burden to be dreaded, but a potential joy that enhances the research process. At these sessions, experts do not simply 'deposit' information. Instead, dialogue occurs on multiple levels: among speakers, between speakers and the audience, within the activist population, with broader media publics and readerships. Passions are aroused, ideas are shared, and hope is created. At the best sessions, participants walk out feeling invigorated, inspired to act and energised to continue their research. The isolation and passivity that characterises the highly conservative Alberta political climate is at least temporarily broken.

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[16] This process is particularly difficult when dialogue occurs across different dimensions of inequality (class, race, gendre), and involving different ends of the political spectrum. While this chapter is focussed specifically on the value of constructing a dialogue amongst activists and academics targeting neo-liberal globalism, this is not meant to imply that dialogue should only occur amongst like-minded individuals. When we value 'knowledge-as-emancipation', it becomes imperative to facilitate dialogue across lines of neo-colonial inequalities.

The Parkland case makes clear that methodology and pedagogy imply much broader issues than the usual concerns of university professors (e.g. proper method of data collection, how to avoid receiving bad student evaluations, effectively using PowerPoint in the classroom). A Freirean pedagogy requires being involved with people, social movements, activists, and more generally, with broader projects of knowledge creation and social transformation. Although those with access to privilege and power have certain leadership responsibilities, Freire believes that if leaders attempt to impose their vision, they will be devitalized and stripped of legitimacy. He strongly argues against a division of labour between the 'thinkers' and 'doers' of the revolution. Instead, there should be continual effort to reconcile the teacher-student contradiction, even it can never be dissolved (Agger 1979, 99; Freire 1970, 107, 53). Freire writes: "it is absolutely essential that the oppressed participate in the revolutionary process with an increasingly critical awareness of their role as subjects of the transformation" (1970, 108). Trying to have a revolution for the people is like trying to have a revolution without people (ibid.). It is to treat the oppressed as if they were "objects which must be saved from a burning building", instead of active subjects who must participate in their own liberation (1970, 47). Even if people's thinking is naïve, or superstitious, real change can only occur when people produce and act upon their own ideas, not the ideas of others (1970, 89).

The Parkland case also makes clear that two fundamental requisites for dialogical education are faith and humility – two factors conspicuously absent in traditional conference settings, and in our opinion, two particularly important criteria for the isolated, materially privileged academic 'professional'. As Freire notes, if the people are not trusted or believed in, then what is the point of having a revolution? (1970, 10). At the same time, Friere insists that "dialogue cannot exist without humility" (1970, 71). The naming of the world cannot be an act of arrogance:

> How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own?... How can I dialogue if I am closed to – and even offended by – the contribution of others?... Self-sufficiency is incompatible with dialogue. (Freire, 1970, 71, emphasis mine)

IV. Towards knowledge and hope

> There is no change without dream, as there is no dream without hope... whenever the future is considered as a pregiven – whether this be a pure repetition of the present, or simply because it 'is what it has to be' – there is no room for utopia, nor therefore for the dream, the option, the decision, or the expectancy in the struggle, which is the only way hope exists.
> -Freire (1994, 91).

☙ This chapter has outlined something of a manifesto for transformative globalisation research conceptualised, a type of research that moves from knowledge-as regulation, towards knowledge-as-emancipation. These objectives may seem ambitious in the extreme, the proposals full of 'youthful' optimism. Indeed, it would require a mammoth effort to implement all these suggestions in the form of a research programme. My intentions are more modest. By signalling possibilities that are already emerging, I hope to encourage further openings for more emancipatory approaches to the study of globalisation. Indeed, it would be hypocritical to present these suggestions as hard-and-fast proposals, particularly since the whole emphasis is on constructing a research process based on a series of dialogues, and grounded in a dialectical understanding of society. This requires debate and discussion – not heavy-handed, top-down prescription.

It now also evident that I have not intended to write a traditional chapter on research methods, the nuts and bolts of the academic process. Instead, I have been concerned with broader questions of methodology: how we might want to think of doing research, what principles we might want to bring into play, and why. Concretely, I argue that emancipatory research on globalisation should be guided by the following epistemological, normative, methodological and strategic principles.

#1. Epistemology: avoiding academic paralysis & unreflective activism

Resisting corporate globalism requires a social praxis. Empty theory, and unreflective activism, both promote knowledge-as-regulation. Emancipatory knowledge and the search for 'true words' mandates a sustained critique of corporate globalisation processes, as well as practical resistance strategies.

Without strategic reflection, Northern activists engaged in anti-corporate activism can become myopic, unaware of how their ideological and material privilege allows them to speak on behalf of peripheral agents. At the same time, pure reflection can lead to paralysis. Without proposals to create alternatives to corporate capitalism, knowledge about globalisation processes can be profoundly dis-empowering, a tendency that unwittingly promotes social control. Fair-trade is one partial solution to this dilemma, albeit a strategy that requires continued reflection about its place shoring up the privilege of Northern consumers. Even so, it at least attempts to address core privilege, creating alternative trading practices that ameliorate the poverty of peripheral groups negatively impacted by globalisation processes (see Chapter Seven).

#2. Normativity: engaging with the present, creating hope for the future

Resisting neo-liberal globalism requires living with the dialectical tension between what is, and what ought to. The concept of generative themes encapsulates both sides of this dualism, and calls on activists and academics to draw out normative propositions from the processes of contesting neo-liberal globalism. In the struggle against the MAI, this process was not linear or conflict-free. Instead, struggles to defeat neo-liberal globalism are vulnerable to a unifying, but ultimately limiting oppositionalism that focuses more easily on 'naming the enemy', than it does on dreaming of alternative modes of economic, social, and political life. Emancipatory knowledge requires the willingness to engage with strategies that create hope.

#3. Methodology: structural analysis and the spark of personal experience

The Freirean process of conscientization holds a productive tension between objective analysis of neo-liberal globalism, and the subjective understanding of oppression and marginalization. Both modes of data collection are necessary to a holistic understanding of resistance to neo-liberal globalism. Globalisation researchers situated in research climate focussed on detached analysis of objective reality need to learn to draw on subjective sources of knowledge such as literature, poetry, music and personal accounts that provide the starting point for personal engagements with knowledge-as-emancipation. Without this personal engagement, knowledge remains detached, alien, and ultimately more regulatory than emancipatory. The Zapatista uprising provides a provocative case study of ongoing processes of conscientization, as well as an example of emancipatory knowledge creation through a social movement. The story begins from a starting point that honoured the subjective experiences of oppression in Chiapan communities, including the particular oppression faced by indigenous women. From this point, a dialogue began which expanded to include an greater understanding of neo-liberalisms' operations in local communities, in the state of Chiapas, within the transnationalised Mexican nation, and finally, within various transnational constituencies inspired by the Zapatistas' personal telling of their struggle for survival (see Chapter Six). This example is not only relevant for social movements, but informs academic struggles to balance understanding of political-economic forces, with subjective, personal accounts that provide a starting point for reflection, inclusion, and empowering relationships to knowledge.

#4. Strategy: sustaining hope in the activist/academia divide

The idea of a banking model of resistance is contrasted with a dialogical model. In a banking model, the omnipotent globalisation researcher assumes that they possess answers that are to be deposited in 'empty' citizen-objects. In a dialogical model, the researcher engages in an active dialogue with citizen-subjects. This is not an act of charity, but is based on the belief that knowledge about globalisation is created through a dialogic process bridging structure and agency, and encouraging a move from passivity to critical thinking, from resignation to hope, from regulation to emancipation. A particularly successful example of this research strategy is found in the intellectual work done by autonomous research centres like the CCPA and Parkland Institute that reside in a liminal space between detached academic analysis of structure, and activist attachment to specific struggles. The success of these research centres nullifies the idea that a retreat to one side or the other is necessary. While intellectual objectivity cannot be seen as a sacrificial lamb for towing a party line, at the same time, complete disengagement is not seen as an excuse to avoid political positioning and self-reflection. The case of the open-door Parkland conference, an event that brings together academics, activists, and citizens together around a common problematic, provides a concrete example of how hope is generated, strategies are constructed, and the research process can be re-energized through a dialogical education model.

These four imperatives to rethink research are relevant for all of the social sciences, but especially urgent for globalisation researchers. If we indeed have entered a turning point in the process of resistance and contestation (Starr, 2000; Klein, 2001), this imposes special obligations on scholars. If we are experiencing a paradigmatic shift in the logic of capitalism, this requires a paradigmatic shift in the praxis of research and contestation. My concern has been to rethink the process of knowledge creation as a dialectical process, one that can be seen as mirroring the growing inter-connectivity, networking, and reflexivity imposed by globalisation processes, but making explicit what we are up against in the hegemonic mainstream: a university structure that is geared to maximizing revenue, uncritically welcoming corporate participation, and promoting a bland internationalism based on a commodified capitalist vision of knowledge-as-regulation.

Globalisation researchers are challenged to go beyond bland statements about levels of interaction (e.g. the global versus the local), or hackneyed campaign slogans concerning ‘bottom-up’ globalisation. Instead, the matter is both more complex, and more exciting. When we leave our offices to dialogue, deconstructing the inside/outside dichotomy of intellectual tradition, the world gets more messy, but also more exciting. While academics clearly cannot engineer the process of resistance to neo-liberal globalism, they can contribute their research energy and resources, becoming more actively engaged in the process of envisaging alternatives and generating hope.

In the first instance, researchers must contribute their doubts and reflections about their own role in corporate-sponsored globalisation processes that form the basis for ecological and human devastation. Historically, many radical intentions have been subdued and co-opted in academic institutions, unwieldy bureaucracies, and pragmatic career concerns. As Freire writes, "once a situation of violence and oppression has been established, it engenders an entire way of life and behaviour of those caught up in it – oppressors and oppressed alike" (1970, 40). We cannot claim to be removed from this way of life, but the hope is to provoke a questioning of academic placement within it. At the same time it is necessary to foster greater self-reflection about our modes of research and argumentation, it is important to recognize the inherent limitations of methodological ponderings. While social reality is inherently discursive, there is more to social reality than discourse, particularly under conditions of late capitalist expansion and ecological exhaustion. As Santos writes:

> Besides argumentation and discourse, there are also work and production, silence and silencing, violence and destruction. Without accounting for the dialectics between argumentative and nonargumentative moments, it is impossible to understand the social construction and destruction of audiences and communities (1995, 46).

It is to these questions that I now turn in the remaining chapters, exploring new forms of solidarity and paradigmatic transitions in the realms of ecology, democracy, solidarity, and consumerism.

Chapter 3

ECOLOGY I

While Chapter Two focused on the epistemological dimension of a paradigm shift, Chapters Three and Four exam a key aspect of the societal dimension: addressing and remedying ecological exhaustion. While the focus is different, the method remains similar. Just as the previous chapter worked to unearth assumptions underlying mainstream globalisation research, this chapter will address unspoken assumptions of the developmentalist paradigm that accompanies neo-liberal globalism. A paradigmatic transition demands new political common sense that politicises areas outside the formal realm of politics, or "citizenplace" (Santos 1995, 52).

In this chapter I argue that a key aspect of this paradigmatic transition involves a politicisation of the biosphere, particularly the biospheric absence in standard developmentalist assumptions of infinite growth, boundless consumption and inevitable progress. This questioning will illuminate the shortcomings of a seldom noticed, but ubiquitous anthropocentrism within development research, even within studies focussed on sustainability. This provides a foundation for Chapter Four, where I explore an emerging paradigm centred on a new ethical common sense of the commons – a concept that has resonance with ecocentric theories, as well as social movement practice. The commons provides a language for talking about ongoing ecological crises – biospheric breakdown, not just capitalist crisis – and also illustrates a logic reflecting contemporary social movements that attempt to create a new ethics of reciprocal relationships and obligations to a larger life-host.

This chapter provides an overview of the logic of exhaustion, key contributions in ecological political theory and political economy, and the crises of developmentalism and over-consumption. It aims to promote the development of an ecocentric sociology, a project that is necessarily multifaceted and long term. This project sees ecological variables not as distant and remote, but as the unavoidable fabric constituting the problems and aspirations identified by human communities – problems of social justice, basic human needs, debt *reduction, and so on. While ecocentric theory can provide an important normative counter-point to anthropocentric tendencies, a sustained empirical critique of capitalism is also required to uproot the interests that perpetuate anthropocentric principles in everyday life and modes of production. As argued in Chapter Two, the normative dualism between what is, and what ought to be must be seen not as an either/or choice, but as an unavoidable dialectic. An ecocentric project must combine normative theorizing that envisages a new political and ethical common sense, with a sustained critique of the capitalist practices and ideologies that currently drive anthropocentric modes of life.*

Chapter 3 will serve as the introduction to an edited book entitled Eco-global/Eco-local: The biospheric challenge to cosmopolitanism (eds.) Josée Johnston, James Goodman, and Mike Gismondi (Zed, forthcoming). Chapter 4 will be published as a chapter within this same book.

Politicising exhaustion: eco-social crisis and the geographic challenge for cosmopolitans

> Ecology is not an expensive whim of the rich, something trendy restricted to ecological groups, or to the Greens and their respective political parties. The ecological question has to do with reaching a new level of globalisation, or world awareness and conscience, where there is a universal understanding of the importance of the earth as a whole, the welfare of nature and of humankind, the interdependence of all, and of the apocalyptic catastrophe menacing all creation.
>
> -Leonardo Boff (2000:7-8).

☙ This chapter serves as a sort of cartographic project. Its first challenge is to sketch the obvious: that a biospheric crisis is now upon us. While such a goal might seem painfully obvious, particularly to natural scientists and ecologists charting these trends, we argue that this crisis has yet to change the fundamental assumptions of much sociological research, political economy, and political theory – all of which are still premised on anthropocentric assumptions of human superiority, and a profound human-nature dualism. The objective is not stop 'thinking like a human', but to question an ethical framework that prioritises human life above all other, and sets ecological variables as distant and remote from the struggles for social justice and basic needs. The ecological crisis is not simply about protecting remote wilderness areas, or a rare species of tree frog; it is irrevocably a social crisis, or rather an *eco-social* crisis.

After sketching the nature of the biospheric crisis, our second goal is to map out the inequitable relations embedded in ecological exhaustion. While this project also might seem patently clear, especially to a political-economy readership, the embedding of capitalist crises within ecological breakdown is a theme often missed within mainstream Western environmentalism. Corporate environmentalism tends towards two units of analysis: individual consumers (who have a responsibility to recycle and buy 'green'), and the blue planet earth that houses individual consumers. A host of middle-ground variables – classes, state-regulation, racial segregation, and north-south inequality – are neglected, and a critical analysis of the ecological devastation of markets is absent. This leads to the ironic outcome of environmentalists in British Columbia supporting the deregulation of public utilities, based on the belief that greater market involvement will lead to a better environmental outcome (See the critique of this position in the chapter by Marjorie Cohen). Our goal in this section is to chart the inextricable connections between ecological exhaustion, and the capitalist narratives of endless 'development', and infinite consumption.

Related to the absence of political-economy in mainstream environmentalism, the third map we provide describes key analytic tools developed by ecological political economists to account for capitalism's ecologically destructive tendencies. While O'Connor's account of the second contradiction of capitalism provides an important starting point, we argue that a more sophisticated analysis must account for the ongoing dialectic between commodification and socialisation, and the qualitatively different modes of capitalist accumulation that result. Here we draw on the writings of Kees van der Pijl and feminist political ecology to argue that ecological devastation cannot be simply explained by the capitalist drive towards commodification. Capitalist commodification has always, and continues to rests upon a social sector, a realm that includes everything from households, to regulatory bodies like states and which work to socialize the costs of accumulation (See Andrew Biro's chapter on the state's role protecting Canadian water). Although efforts to preserve the biospheric commons may actually achieve these ends, they may unwittingly facilitate the expansion of capitalist accumulation by socializing the costs of ecological breakdown (See the chapter by Josée Johnston & James Goodman critiquing this tendency within sustainable development, as well as Ineke Locke's chapter on the corporate responsibility movement).

Our fourth and final map relates differing responses to global capital accumulation, and maps out a central tension in this book: between cosmopolitan and localist responses to eco-social crises. Ecological degradation simultaneously challenges us to think 'big' about problems like atmospheric warming, at the same time it mocks lofty cosmopolitan idealism, challenging the ability of abstract ideals to un-root local ways of life and systems of production that are profoundly unsustainable. It is instructive that when we ask people about abstract principles of democracy or sustainability, it is difficult to find dissent. These are principles that most people, even the most nefarious dictators or greedy corporate billionaires, give lipservice to. But what happens when the particulars of these principles enter the equation . . . *Are you willing to reduce your water consumption to live more sustainably? Are you willing to eat foods from your bio-region, or limit imported foods to those grown with sustainable production methods and providing a living wage? As an elite core citizen, are you willing to follow through on the material distribution that a concept like global citizenship requires, giving material 'votes' to the under-represented majority world?*

It is at this point of particularism that dissent arises, the debate becomes infinitely more complex, and the need for research in the messy geographic middle-ground becomes obvious. Here we argue for the relevance of geography, and a notion of scale to further illuminate these tensions. Concrete empirical research gives us a sense of how different eco-social battles are most effectively waged on different scales. While we may be wary of abstract cosmopolitanism, we cannot simply reject the idea of cosmopolitan aspirations in favour of the local. The local can be provincial, narrow, bigoted, and xenophobic. It can preserve the ecological rights of the privileged, while denying access and basic needs to the majority world. Yet resistance to neo-liberal globalism demonstrates that solidarity can also cross local boundaries, leading to the formation of political alliances across political and geographic borders. Different middle-ground scales of struggle, like transnational advocacy networks lobbying to reduce third world debt, can help strengthen the local, while simultaneously advancing cosmopolitan ideals (see Janet Conway's Chapter on the Jubilee 2000 movement). At the same time, the scale of transnational capital accumulation can mean extreme exclusion at the local level, particularly when the state does not intervene to protect access to local commons (see David Barkin's chapter on coastal tourist development in Mexico).

While we support the global extension of democracy, sustainability and equality, much more work needs to be done to determine the most effective scales for addressing specific crisis of sustainability, and to excavate the biospheric myopia that continues to plague our theories of the social world, as well as the occlusion of inequality structuring ecological exhaustion. Having laid out this four part cartographic project, we now turn to the first theme in our discussion: the presence (and absence) of biospheric crisis.

Map #1. The eco-social crisis

> For the first time in history, ecology is
> moving to the centre of politics. Its
> arrival there is long overdue and may
> have come too late.
> -Kate Soper (1996:81).

☙ We start this chapter from the simple premise that the era of ecological crisis is now upon the human species. While substantial amounts of money have been spent by the corporate environmental movement convincing North Americans that this is *not the case*, a substantial pool of evidence points in a different direction. Even David Harvey, a critic of doomsday scenarios and the notion of biospheric physical limits, writes:

> [A] strong case can be made that the environmental transformations collectively under way in these times are larger-scale, riskier and more far-reaching and complex in their implications (materially, spiritually, aesthetically) than has ever been the case before in human history (1999:115).

In a series of essays written after the September 11th terrorist attacks in 2001, American essayist and poet Wendell Berry begins with the assumption that the environmental crisis has been established (2002). While "the problems of pollution, species, extinction, loss of wilderness, loss of farmland, loss of topsoil, may still be ignored or scoffed at", they cannot be denied, and have acquired a "certain standing, a measure of discussability, in the media and in some scientific, academic, and religious institutions" (2002:15). Yet even as the nature of the crisis has been established, there is the question of what kind of crisis is this?

What does an 'environmental' crisis have to do with humans? According to the hegemonic anthropocentric perspective, very little. We beg to differ. While all social crises are unavoidably embedded in the 'natural' world, the biospheric crisis has important social causes and outcomes. This section questions how ecological crises have been conceptualised, aiming to contribute to a broader, long-term project of building a more ecocentric approach to globalisation research.

Nature, or the environment cannot simply be tacked on top of standard analysis of globalisation. While there is mounting evidence that current systems of production are unsustainable, these questions and concerns remain marginal to the mainstream concerns of social scientists, sociologists, and social theorists (Eichler 1999:187; Smith 2001). This separation between humans, and the non-human world has deep roots, arguably originating back to Aristotle who turned away from pre-Socratic concerns with cosmology and nature, positing the existence of a universe where humans superiority was premised on rationality (Sessions 1988). The human/nature dualism is also deeply associated with a Newtonian worldview characterized by technological optimism, atomism, and anthropocentrism (Sheldrake 1990). Western civilization is built on "the belief that there is a clear and morally relevant dividing line between humankind and the rest of nature, that humankind is the only or principal source of value and meaning in the world, and that nonhuman nature is there for no other purpose but to serve humankind" (Eckersley 1992:51).

The separation of 'society' from 'nature', what diChiro calls "colonial nature talk", has also meant a long-standing orientation within Euro-American environmental activism towards the preservation of Edenic wilderness areas, endangered species, and rain forests, leaving aside issues of human-nature interactions in the workplace or homeplace (DiChiro 1998:124, 138; Cronon 1996). While interpretive traditions in the social sciences privileged the subjective perceptions of humans over the positivist traditions of natural science, there is still a tendency in both objective and subjective approaches to treat humans as separate and apart from nature. In other words, the social sciences in both its positivist and non-positivist variants have tended to share the natural sciences nature/human distinction (Santos 1995:17). This view is, of course, deeply contested by ecology, understood as the "science and art of relations and of related beings" (Boff 2000:11).

Catton and Dunlap dub this anthropocentric myopia the "human exceptionalism paradigm" (HEP) – a unifying, and ubiquitous framework which assumes among other things, that the biophysical environment is largely irrelevant to human affairs, which are purportedly determined primarily in social and cultural realms (1980:34; 1994). Following Durkheim, social facts are related to other social facts – not to the realm of the natural, physical world (Smith 2001). This worldview pits 'man' against 'nature', which is seen as a separate and distinct realm, rather than the very fabric within which all life takes place. While the dominant view of sustainable development depicts society, the environment, and the economy as interconnected spheres, a more radical, materialist vision conceptualises all human activity as smaller spheres inescapably located within a larger biospheric whole. In Eichler's words:

> Given our total dependence on the earth, we need to conceptualise all human activities *within* the larger circle of the biosphere. There is no economic activity outside the environment! We have thus already arrived at a different model: all human activities are conceptualised as located within a sub-system within the ecospheric system (1999:198-99).

Eckersley's survey of environmentalism and political theory identifies this turn to incorporate the biospheric as being part of an *ecocentric* approach to social and political theory (1992). Ecocentric is understood as an "ecologically informed philosophy of *internal relatedness*, according to which all organisms are not simply interrelated with their environment but also *constituted* by those very environmental interrelationships" (1992:49). Eckersley defends ecocentrism against the charge of misanthropy, insisting that to be ecocentric is not to favour 'nature' over humans, but to challenge the deep seated "ideology of human chauvinism" (1992:56).[1] Put differently, ecocentrism contests the omnipresent anthropocentric assumption that human life is ethically more important than the lives of non-human species, and challenges the ecologically suspect notion that human life can be considered to exist separate and apart from the rest of the biotic community. An ecocentric perspective of emancipation is premised on the need to develop a more relational view of a "larger self" that aspires not to control others in the biotic community, but to "maximize a sense of agency in the world in the context of an experience of continuity with others" (Eckersley 1992:54; Fox 1995:249-268). Although maximizing autonomy of non-human species is fundamental, conceptualising emancipation in a broad ecocentric sense does not neglect human autonomy. It is also necessary to struggle towards an expansion of justice for human beings who experience a deprivation of agency, whether that be through material deprivation, patriarchal oppression, or class positioning (Eckersley 1992:56).

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[1] Eckersley also provides salient defences of other common critiques of ecocentric positions: that they deny an inescapable human way of viewing the world, that they are

While ecocentric political theorizing is a necessary part of praxis, it is not a complete, or sufficient picture of the theory/practice dialectic. Eckersley's account of ecocentric political theorizing discusses the important interrelationship between ecological science and ecocentric political theory (1992:59), but gives short thrift to the relationship between normative theorizing and the justification provided by social actors outside the academy. In other words, how does ecocentric theory relate to the lived experience of social actors? While sophisticated theoretical ecocentrism might reflect experiences of environmental activists, it is not clear how this theorizing is in turn, informed by the experience of movements and actors contesting the intensification of global capitalism. Yet

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difficult to translate into legal and cultural practice, and that they construct ethical principles based on a romanticized view of nature (1992:55-60).

exploring ecocentric praxis is critical, particularly given the importance of a phenomenology of human-nature dependence in the development of ecological ethics. Put more simply, it is only by fostering people's lived experience of their unavoidable connections within the natural world that a moral imperative to care for the world can develop. Care for the earth becomes a psychological consequence of this experience, rather than a logical consequence of a formalistic ethics mandating concern for non-human species (Fox 1995:247).[2] How a critical mass of urban people can experience this type of relationship to the non-human natural world is a profoundly sociological problematic, and begs further investigation into the role of human actors as they organize against eco-social crises.

Besides research that explores the complex relationship between the theory and practice of ecocentrism in relation to lived experience and social movements, we might also ask how ecocentric positions interact with, and are subordinate to the dominant HEP in the social sciences. Eckersley adds a caveat in a footnote explaining why she does "not discuss the most blatant anthropocentric environmental position, "unrestrained exploitation and expansionism", since no Green activist or emancipatory ecopolitical theorist would support this position" (1992:196). This is a fair analytic division of labour, particularly given the breadth of topics she does address. However, it is not a division that can be sustained as a larger intellectual project. It is precisely the embeddedness of productivism and unrestrained expansionism in the social sciences (not to mention the environmental movement) that needs to be unearthed, excavated, and understood. Anthropocentric assumptions run deep, and are intricately related to capitalist structures dependent on their perpetuation. While social scientists are waking up to the unsustainability of contemporary modes of production, current sociological concepts do not always specify how we are to move towards an ecocentric conceptualisation of these social systems as deeply, and inevitably embedded within the biosphere. This begs the question of how social scientists are to think our way out of this ontological myopia. To reiterate, the environment cannot simply be included, or tacked on top of conventional sociological analyses. Rather, social scientists must learn to rethink the myriad fundamental anthropocentric assumptions that do not include core principles of ecological embeddedness (Eichler 1999:189).

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[2] In the words of Arne Naess, who provides the basis for Fox's theory of transpersonal ecology: "I'm not much interested in ethics or morals. I'm interested in how we

At the same time political economists, globalisation scholars, and social theorists alike need a way of addressing global ecological crisis, they must also avoid the deliberate, and sustained cooptation of environmental concepts by the corporate environmental movement (Sklair 2001:206-215). To make our job even more difficult, we must also seek out conceptual tools that are theoretically rigorous, reflecting the epistemological sensitivity delivered by the post-structuralist turn in social theory. At the same time, these concepts cannot be dreamed up without

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experience the world…Ethics follows from how we experience the world." (cited in Fox 1995:219).

praxis, or without a critical relationship to ontological 'nature' as such. While understanding social constructions of nature is critical, this work should complement, and not be a substitute for research that examines the societal-ecological interactions that underlie biospheric crises (Dunlap and Catton 1994). As Mellor succinctly states, "in defense of the social we must not overly socialize the natural" (1996: 263). But the opposite is also true: to defend the natural, we cannot under-theorize the social mechanisms that constitute ecological degradation. To fully appreciate the stratified shape of eco-social crises, we need to move beyond universalised notions of the planet, or individualized notions of the solitary consumers, and further investigate how race, class, gender, and colonialism stratify degradation.

Map #2. (Post)development, (over)consumption, and north-south inequality

> The result is paradoxical and hypocritical: While the countries of the northern hemisphere are the main nations responsible for the global ecological crisis, they are also the countries that are unwilling to take on the main responsibility for correcting the destructive processes. Instead, they seek to impose the burden of helping nature to recover on countries in the southern hemisphere.
>
> -Leonardo Boff (2000:17).

☙ The first critical hinge in the eco-social crises sketched above centres around the concept of *development*, its myriad manifestations within liberal productivism, and concomitant processes of contestation. Development operates more like a religion than a science, creating faith that infinite economic growth is possible, and that this growth will eventually deliver a wide range of consumer items for all of the world's human species.[3] While development studies emerged to answer the questions of growth and prosperity for 'underdeveloped' post-colonial societies (Pieterse 1998), post-development, or anti-development perspectives have redefined the problem of development as pertaining to ecological consequences of the resource hungry, 'over-developed' North.[4]

Consumption, and the cultural-ideology of consumerism is a second critical hinge in the exhaustion of the biosphere.[5] Consumption sustains human life, but by definition, it draws on and often degrades biospheric resources. Grossly uneven consumption patterns reflect sharpening global development divides, and have lead to cries for radical change. In 1998 the United Nations Development Report focused on "changing today's consumption patterns", highlighting both the exponential growth in global consumption – doubling to US$24 trillion between 1975 and 1995 – and the growing consumption divide between north and south (UNDP 1998). It found that a quarter of the world's population lacks access to basic needs, and that for large populations absolute consumption levels had been falling, a trend that is particularly dramatic in Africa. The figures are damning: the richest 20% of the population accounted for 86% of global consumption (US $20.6 tr), and the poorest 20% accounted for 1.3% of global consumption (US $3.1 tr).[6]

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[3] This assumption is found even in circles of critical environmentalists. See Gwen Dyer's video series, *The Human Race*, Part I. *The Bomb Under the World* (1995). An excellent historical account and analysis of the ideological power of development can be in found in Gilbert Rist's work, *The history of development: From western origins to global faith* (1997).

[4] While there is no consensus on what constitutes a "post-development" position, for examples of influential 'post-development' perspectives see Sachs (1995), Rahnema (1997), and Griesgraber and Gunter (1996). For a study of the maldevelopment of the North, see Sachs et. al. (1998). For a critical review of the post-development literature see Nederveen Pieterse (1998).

[5] Consumerism as a cultural ideology, is distinct from, but related to the general phenomena of consumption – a more general term to describe the usage of resources in the sustenance of human life. The term "cultural-ideology of consumerism" is understood as the "set of beliefs and practices that persuades people that consumption far beyond the satisfaction of physical needs is, literally, at the centre of meaningful existence and that the best organized societies are those that place consumer satisfaction at the centre of all their major institutions" (Sklair 2000:5).

Compounding poverty, the ecological degradation caused by ever-increasing consumption was falling "most severely on the poor", and the globe as a whole was seen to be fast approaching the "outer limits" of environmental survival. Exploitation of renewable resources dramatically outpaces ecological regeneration, and non-renewable resources (water soil, fish, trees, biodiversity) are reaching points of absolute exhaustion. Twenty percent of all living species were eliminated between 1975 and 2000 (Boff 2000:15). Each year 25 million tons of soil are lost to salination, desertification, and erosion – an area as large as the Caribbean region excluding Cuba (ibid.). Twenty million hectares of forest are lost annually (ibid.). As Mahatma Ghandi was reported to have said: "There is enough on the earth for everyone's need, but not enough for anyone's greed."

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[6] While poverty cannot be definitively measured using this type of quantitative economic data, since it tends to only capture formal economic transactions included in calculations

Today such analyses of ecological exhaustion are not particularly shocking or unusual in international NGO forums, and neither are the conclusions that the UNDP reached in their research. The problem for the poor was, and is, identified as a problem of *under*-consumption. Northern consumption levels are identified as a problem of sustainability, requiring a "move to more sustainable consumption patterns", but are not explicitly identified as a problem of *over*-consumption rooted in the culture-ideology of consumerism. While we can all agree on the need to deliver basic human needs for the poorest of the poor, the issue of international and intergenerational equity, and trans-border resource depletion and dependence is quietly avoided – not just in NGO circles, but in transnational solidarity work more generally.

The UNDP's primary recommendation has been to raise consumption levels for the world's poorest people, an expansion that is to occur mainly through increased economic growth. As the UDNP administrator, James Speth argued at the launch of the Report: "[w]e must make a determined effort to eradicate poverty and expand the consumption of more than one billion desperately poor people who have been left out of the global growth in consumption" (UNDP Press Release, 8 September 1998). Despite its nod in the direction of ecological exhaustion and planetary limits, the report put great faith in the capacity of individual governments to promote "sustainable development". Again, sustainable consumption was identified as the issue, while over-consumption by the world's

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of gross domestic product, these figures at least partially document the situation of dramatic planetary resource inequality.

affluent, or the need to move towards a post-growth paradigm, are both left un-addressed. As the New Economic Foundations pointed out, "[i]f you argue the only route to poverty alleviation is economic growth based on globalised trade, it follows you will not say that rich people should earn less or consume less." (1998). Instead of redistribution, the message is that "rich people should consume less nasty things", rather than dramatically altering resource-dependent lifestyles and production practices (ibid.).

What is the significance of focusing on *sustainable* consumption, rather than *over*-consumption? Does this simply indicate an innocent preference for a specific nomenclature? In light of post-structuralist theorizing on the importance of language constituting social relationships, this is a difficult position to sustain. The language preference cannot be seen as a coincidental, or innocent choice, but reflects a troubling ideological tendency. By using the term 'sustainable', the need for dramatic reductions in consumption levels in the minority world is left unarticulated, and depoliticised. The need to address the planet's environmental limits, and the challenges to northern living standards that this requires, are similarly avoided. The quasi-religious faith in infinite growth through 'development' is sustained. Attention to planetary crisis and resource limits is also averted. A fundamental fallacy of capitalist ideology is carefully masked: the present model of development and growth is fallaciously depicted as applicable on a universal level (Boff 2000:20; Shiva 1999).

Post-development[7] frameworks challenge these assumptions about infinite growth, universalised consumption possibilities, and planetary crisis. One manifestation of this challenge comes in the form of the 'living planet index', an indicator launched by the World Wildlife Fund in 1998. Like the UNDP Report, the *Living Planet Report* also focuses on rising and unequal consumption, but this data is used to develop a more precise indicator of consumption pressure that takes into account the collective biospheric commons, measuring the total environmental impact of consumption on planetary resources. The report asserted that from the mid-1970s total consumption pressure had begun to exceed the earth's total capacity for regeneration, and that by 1997 consumption pressure exceeded regenerative capacity by a factor of 30%. Put differently, to sustain the 1997 consumption, the world would have to be 30% larger; the earth's 'ecological footprint' was 30% too big.

The implication of course, is that the 'footprint' needs to be drastically reduced, which begs the question of whose feet are we talking about. This question has particularly pressing normative dimensions in a global context of 1 billion severely impoverished peoples. The Report highlighted that the footprint of an average consumer in the industrialized world, was "four times that of an average consumer in the lower income countries", like China and India (2000). With this type of footprint analysis, there is an important, and profound shift in responsibility for planetary exhaustion. The focus is on Northern over-consumption, rather than Southern under-consumption, as the primary development problematic. This position thus turns the developmental nexus on its head, asking the North what it intends to do about its own maldevelopment.

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[7] This discussion is not intended to encapsulate the vast range of positions found within 'post-development' writings. For a critical reaction to neo-traditionalism within post-development perspectives, and a defence of "reflexive development", see Nederveen Pieterse (1998). For a contrasting defence of the utility of post-development critiques to development practitioners, see Nustad (2001).

Behind these abstract indicators of consumption levels and biospheric degradation lie deeply engrained power relations. In the first instance, these operate at a planetary level, marking out a profound divide in consumption and development between the minority and the majority world. Revealingly, both the UNDP and WWF reports fail to debate the relationship *between* Northern and Southern consumption levels, or discuss the interrelationships of responsibility for environmental degradation. Attention is thus taken away from the fact that some interests receive dramatic material benefits from environmental degradation, while the majority world experiences many of the consequences. While there are clearly environmental problems of a truly global scale, such as atmospheric warming, even these problems will result in differentiated abilities to adapt based on resource distribution.

The de-politicized nature of discussions on the inequity of biospheric degradation, or the "stratification of sustainability", reflects the relatively undertheorized status of the relationship between social stratification and environmental degradation (Eichler 1999:191). Notions of class are usually absent from the mainstream discourse on sustainability, particularly a notion of class that is trans-boundary, historical, and sensitive to different scales of oppression. The red-green conflict might be given a nod, but the discourse of sustainability implies a world where wealthy nations need only to 'readjust', not restrict.

This theoretical shortfall doesn't make the connections between ecological degradation and material impoverishment any less real or pressing. Current consumption patterns in the North are directly related to economic structures that constrain consumption in the South. In 1999, for example, Northern lenders secured a South-to-North transfer of $US46 billion from the poorest sixty-two countries (United Nations 2001). And this is only the most visible form of transfer. Others are embedded in financial flows, profit taking by multinational corporations, and various practices of trading relations (market saturation and commodity pricing). Beyond this is the historical legacy of asset-stripping and environmental degradation under colonial and neo-colonial regimes. Ironically, with the onset of global environmental crisis, the North has now become dependent on Southern under-consumption. Maldevelopment in the North has brought the planet to the brink of exhaustion, and the North is now dependent on the conservation, not consumption of Southern resources. This gives the Southern countries a new leverage in international relations. "Southern states are well aware of their power of denial in environmental affairs", and this could be used to widen the global environmental agenda beyond what are largely Northern concerns (Laferriere 1994:97; Lipietz 1995; Jacobsen 1999).

One way of theorizing connections between imperialism and environmental degradation is through the concept of ecological debts. When the biosphere is conceptualised as the common heritage of humankind, then one group's destruction of that heritage establishes a debt to the rest of humankind. The destruction of Northern forests, for instance, creates a planetary dependence on Southern forests. Preservation of these forests – to safeguard biodiversity or the climate – then becomes the primary responsibilities of the peoples who created that dependence, namely the North. Seen this way, the North owes an ecological debt to the south, and not only for forest depletion but also for many other aspects of environmental degradation. Given that Northern development has irreparably undermined the long-term development prospects of the South, that debt is arguably infinite (Donoso & Walker 1999; Walker 2000; Jakobsen 1999).

While the notion of north-south ecological debts is an important corrective to the ideological obfuscation of most mainstream environmentalism (where individual consumers float together on a troubled planet earth), a more nuanced conceptualisation of ecological stratification is required that can account for multiple scales of inequality. The class divisions that shape consumption levels and their associated levels of ecological degradation operate within, as well as between nations, along axes of intra-state inequality, gender, race, class, and ethnicity. Northern populations are not a homogenous block that benefit equally from environmental degradation, any more than the South can be characterized as a monolithic package of 'eco-victims'. While comparative national data can be a useful starting point, these approaches have serious limitations in the construction of a more sophisticated understanding of ecological degradation and stratification, and in particular, do not account for the specific class dynamics of biospheric degradation.

Map #3. Capitalism and biospheric degradation

> The issue is no longer than capitalism is showing signs of collapse and 'socialism' is around the corner. What is failing today is not capital but the capacity of society and nature to support its discipline.
>
> -Kees Van der Pijl (1999:48)

> I don't think we're going to get anywhere until we learn to make this economic system subservient to the earth's capacity.
>
> -Vandana Shiva

☙ While pre-capitalist systems have their own unique histories of ecological degradation (McNeill 1992), contemporary theorizing about inequality and ecological degradation must take account of capitalism's dynamic relationship with ecological systems. It is clearly problematic to link ecological crisis and capitalism in an exclusive line of argumentation. Capitalism is not the *only* environmentally destructive mode of production or system of social organization. Still, interrogating the role of capitalist dynamics in ecological devastation is unavoidable and critical to understand contemporary degradation, given the contemporary dominance of the capitalist mode of production globally.

Unpacking these relationships between nature and human production is precisely what the field of ecological political economy sets as its agenda, and its numerous contributions put forward powerful explanatory tools and debates that further our understanding of these connections. Importantly, a focus on capitalist conditions of production leads us to question the common focus on individual consumers as primary agents of ecological destruction, an ideological move that detracts attention away from the role of corporations and semi-corporate institutions in biospheric degradation (Lodziak 2000). The environmental crisis is not a product of consumption, per se, but rather a product of the conditions of production – namely of how a commodity is produced, distributed and consumed. This focuses our attention on the process of commodity production, and on the concept of the commodity itself.

What is it in capitalist social relations that leads to biospheric degradation? This requires an understanding of what defines capitalism as a social system.[8] One key element is the presence of the market as an *imperative*, rather than an opportunity (Wood 1999). Non-capitalist social systems have markets, but they are optional, a secondary feature of social life that accompanies production for subsistence but does not attempt to replace subsistence as the primary mode of access to life goods. Under capitalism, markets became a necessary feature of social life. You don't participate in markets because you necessarily want to, rather, you enter into markets because you have to attain access to the means of life: everything from clothing and food to sexual satisfaction and mortician services. Berry comments on a phenomenon that has become so obvious to the fish swimming in capitalist waters, that it appears almost banal:

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[8] The unique features and origins of a capitalist mode of production are still a matter of great debate in Marxist historiography. Different scholars focus on what they think are the key factors (e.g. wage relations, the separation of ownership from work). Meiksins Wood's recent intervention has set a high standard in the search for the common dominators of capitalist systems (1999). Charting the rise of capitalism in the agrarian production of 16th Century England leads Wood to contend that capitalism is distinguished by the dominance of the commodity form (almost everything produced for sale in the market), and the presence of the market imperative – both capital and labor are dependent on the market for the market for the basic conditions of their reproduction (1999:70).

> [w]had has happened is that most people in our country [the US], and apparently most people in the "developed" world, have given proxies to the corporations to produce and provide all of their food, clothing, and shelter. Moreover, they are rapidly giving proxies to corporations or governments to provide entertainment, education, child care, care of the sick and the elderly, and many other kinds of "service" that once were carried on informally and inexpensively by individuals or households or communities. Our major economic practice, in short, is to delegate the practice to others (2002:36).

Under capitalism, markets are the primary means of social reproduction where both labour and capital must participate to obtain access to the means of reproduction.

The market imperative under capitalism has meant that the building blocks of social life, natural and social, are increasingly transformed into commodities produced solely for the purpose of exchange in the marketplace. The commodification process is always historical and never totalising. Commodification inevitably rests on a community and household substratum that supports and sustains productive relations. Traditional Marxist theory has typically neglected the relationship between the productive realm of the economy and a supporting reproductive realm based on devalued labour, often carried out by women, thereby obscuring the biological and ecological parameters of reproduction (Mellor 1996; Mies 1986; Mies & Vennholdt-Thomsen 1999). Rosa Luxemburg's work sought to demystify the relationships undergirding capital accumulation, and reassert the connection between wealth and the "bounty of nature" (1970:243). Feminist political-economists have built on Luxemburg's insights on the primacy of subsistence economies, arguing that life preserving and life-producing subsistence labour of women, as well as natural materials, are depicted as 'free', but yet are essential to the continued growth of capitalism. Mies, Bennholdt-Thomsen, and von Werlhof conceptualise this as the "iceberg model of capitalist patriarchal economics", whereby only the tip of the iceberg – capital and wage labour – is visible to mainstream economic approaches, including Marxism (1999:31). The vast area underneath the surface includes women's unpaid housework, caring work, nurturing work, subsistence peasants' work, colonies (external and internal), and nature itself.

While serving as the unappreciated handmaiden for capitalist accumulation, the supporting subsistence substratum has potentially liberatory dimensions, serving as a model for a sustainable subsistence mode of life (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen 1993).[9] Resistance centred around reproduction is not the exclusive domain of women, but it is irredeemably gendered. While women throughout the world participate in various commercial and economic activities, they are often charged with managing access to the means of life (food, health care, clothing). This responsibility "puts women in a position to oppose threats to health, life, and vital subsistence resources, regardless of economic incentives and to view the environmental issues form the perspective of the home, as well as that of personal and family health" (Rocheleau et. al. 1996:9). These defences can take diverse forms: from community efforts against toxic dumping in poor neighbourhoods, to struggles to preserve access to safe food in Poland, to the Chipko movement protesting deforestation in India (see Rochelau et. al. 1996).

The realm of 'everyday life' and local subsistence economy contains energies, imagination, and potentialities that may resist progressive commodification (See chapter by Johnston & Goodman; See also Lefebvre 1991; Shields 1999:65; de Certeau 1984; Berry 2002). Yet even with this observed (and potential) resistance, the commodification tendency is clearly the dominant force of modern economic systems. It may "tend to progressively stifle the instincts and emotions that structure everyday life, resulting in alienated, externally controlled,

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[9] There creates a difficult tension for eco-feminists theorists: how to simultaneously demand the revalorisation of the work of caring and nurturing in the reproductive realm, at the same time speak out against the exploitation that occurs when women take full responsibility for reproductive work, affording men time and freedom to dominate the political-economy of the public realm (Soper 1996b:270).

'functionalised' behaviour and objectively pauperised human relations", as well as a "commodification of the self", where each individual becomes "a living advertisement of him/herself as a marketable item" (Van der Pijl 1998, 10, 13; Marcuse 1964). While commodification is never complete, its expansion is part of capitalism's ever-present need for growth, explaining its entry into increasingly intimate levels of the psyche and the biosphere, as in reproductive technologies, lifestyle branding, genetic patenting, and remaining realms of subsistence production. This powerful and overarching commodification tendency leads Van der Pijl to conclude, "[i]t is therefore not intended as moralism if we speak here . . . of a tendency towards universal prostitution" (1998:14). What needs to be emphasized is that this commodification drive, moving towards the "commodification of everything", is highly dynamic and expansionary – as per the dictates of capitalist markets: accumulation, profit maximization, and competition (Wood 1999:118-119; Wallerstein 1995). According to Van der Pijl, commodification means that:

> … the lives of ever more people are determined by tendentially world-embracing market relations . . Goods produced, services rendered, but also the raw material of nature and human beings as such, are thus subjected to an economic discipline which defines and treats them as commodities . . ever more aspects of community life are restructured by free, equivalent exchange relations (1998:8-9).

Capitalism must grow to survive, and this commodification process has particularly radical implications for subsistence communities, women's labour, and the biosphere. While static capitalism is by its very nature an unsustainable capitalism,[10] this growth imperative inevitably runs up against the natural limits of the earth's resources. It is capitalisms' inability to remain static, its need to continually expand and commodify that is a core cause of ecological crisis (Strange 2000:60). This is particularly devastating since commodity relations force a separation from the biospheric roots of production:

> Commodity relations presuppose the separation of the product from concrete social relations, disarticulating commodities from the relations of production that still were largely transparent in earlier types of society (Van der Pijl 1998:13).

Just as commodify fetishism obscures the source of a commodity's value in human labouring, ecological Marxists have noted that it works to cultivate consumer ignorance about the biospheric origins of a finished product (Soper 1996a:87).

Identifying core principles within capitalist social systems like markets and commodification is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for understanding the particularities of contemporary ecological degradation under late capitalist globalization. We need to further identify more specific logics of the capitalism-nature dialectic. The seminal work of James O'Connor on the "second contradiction" of capitalism (1996), written in the founding issue of *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, attempted to do precisely that: chart out a general principle for understanding capitalism's complex, and destructive metabolism with nature in the late 20th century.

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[10] While spatial limitations prevent a thorough exegesis of Marxist theory of capitalist accumulation, the important role of money in capitalism's expansionary drive should be noted. The circulation of commodities is of less importance than the circulation of capital – using money to get more money; commodities are only a means to that end, not the end in itself. This process is represented by the general formula of capital (Money – Commodities – More Money / M-C-M').

i. The second contradiction of capitalism

☙ O'Connor argued that traditional Marxist thought has only understood half of the story – the half focussed on the crisis of over-production, or the first contradiction of capitalism.[11] The first contradiction is a phenomenon recognized by Henry Ford and John Maynard Keynes: when individual capitalists try to raise profits by cutting wages, speeding up work, and lowering standards, the unintended effect is to reduce the final demand for consumer commodities, and slow down the economy. According to O'Connor, the focus on productive relations in traditional Marxist thought has meant a dearth of attention to the conditions of reproduction, and more specifically, capital's difficulty sustaining the conditions of its existence. Put differently, what gets neglected in the focus on demand (capitalism's internal contradiction) is the crisis of supply related to the degradation of conditions of production, or what O'Connor famously termed, "the second contradiction of capitalism" (1996). While the first contradiction is primarily manifested in the realisation crisis – the problem of maintaining consumption levels while squeezing wages – the second contradiction is production-based, where social and environmental dumping in the name of profit maximisation undermines the overall capacity for ecological renewal and social reproduction, thereby raising overall productions costs. This contradiction describes how increases in the costs of land, labour, space, and infrastructure can induce cost-induced economic obstacles for capitalist expansion.

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[11] O'Connor's analysis was not without precedent. His focus on the conditions of capitalist reproduction was predated by the critiques of feminist political economists dating back to Rosa Luxembourg. Strange argues that O'Connor's second contradiction bears a striking, and unacknowledged resemblance to Gorz's analysis of the crisis of reproduction written nearly twenty years earlier (Strange 2000; Gorz 1980). O'Connor himself acknowledges that a focus on conditions of production was addressed by Schnaiberg, Wilkinson, Sunkel and Leal (1996:ff.27). Our focus on O'Connor's notion of a "second contradiction" is justifiable, however, given the extraordinary prominence of

Crises of the second contradiction occur in two ways that are intermingled in the real world (O'Connor, 1996). *First*, the drive for profitability causes the long-run exhaustion of the natural and social substratum; with scarcity of resources comes rising prices and falling profits. *Second*, social movements move to protect the natural and social substratum, and by doing so, raise the cost of these inputs. Because capital does not own the conditions of production (like it owns the forces of production), and because it must contend with democratic struggles for control, this means that the second contradiction has an explicitly political dimension (Strange 2000). According to O'Connor, the first contradiction of realisation leads to social action on the part of labour movements leading to rectify the repression of wages, thereby ameliorating the crisis of demand. The second cost

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his theory as a focal point for discussions in ecological political economy in the past decade.

contradiction, however, is associated with the activities of new social movements that politicise the degradation of resources, and the corporate externalisation of costs associated with environmental externalities like pollution.

Critics of O'Connor have noted, however, that in practice these categories are much more fluid than O'Connor implies. There have been many productive responses to O'Connor's work generating important research questions and debates (Rosewarne 1997; Strange 2000; Benton 1996:187-242). The important critical intervention for our discussion is to question O'Connor's analytic separation of two distinct logics of crisis and resistance – one rooted in labour, the first contradiction, the second rooted in the environment and other new social movements responding to the degradation of the conditions of production. This separation underestimates the overlap between these two categories, as well as the capacity of capitalism to co-opt demands for environmental protection in the short run through processes of socialization. By focusing on rising costs as separate from demand-side issues, we may neglect critical long-run concerns about rapacious commodification and growth, and obscure the ecocentric imperative to connect economic systems to biospheric limits.

While delivering analytic clarity, the separation between a first and second contradiction tends to underestimate the important overlap between these two modes of resistance. Environmental degradation accompanies the first crisis of over-accumulation, and labour exploitation is a key method of resolving the falling profits associated with the second contradiction of capital. Strange writes:

> [i]n O'Connor's highly abstract exposition there appear to be no mechanisms directly linking the first and the second contradictions. . . what O'Connor's exposition fails to adequately comprehend is precisely the dialectical unity between capitalisms' 'two' contradictions (2000:10).

The work of André Gorz, in particular, suggests that ecological crisis is not confined to the second contradiction as O'Connor suggests, but is fundamentally rooted in over-accumulation and its antithetical relationship with self-limitation (1980:27; 1993; Strange 2000). O'Connor can also be criticized for minimizing labour's agency in responding to the first contradiction (emphasizing structural conditions, and the subordination of labour to capitalist imperatives), and overestimating the agency of social movements resisting the second contradiction, demanding regulation of the conditions of production, and somehow remaining independent from the logic of capital (Strange 2000:12-13).

When the issue is looked at more historically and sociologically (and less abstractly), it becomes difficult to segregate ecological devastation (and agency) to the second contradiction that O'Connor identifies. Struggles over labour conditions are not just about maximizing wages, but are also fundamentally rooted in the struggle to alter quality of life, and expand control over the conditions of reproduction (e.g. child care, quality of life, length of work day)(Gorz 1980: 130-145; Gorz 1993; Lebowitz 1996). At the same time, many of the so-called 'new' social movements are also motivated by questions of the first contradiction – regulating the inequity of class society – as well as challenging the fundamental supposition that more consumption (more demand) is necessarily synonymous with 'more' life. Issues like the application of biotechnology to food sources are emblematic in their ability to bring together resistance across sectoral divides – farmers, environmentalist, consumer groups – to protest the increasing commodification of social life, from seeds to plant matter to packaged food, as well as the unknown costs and risks associated with these eco-social interventions. The protests in Seattle were also important in setting the stage for protest in the North that crossed these demand/supply boundaries. While O'Connor's work was critical for placing the centrality of ecological degradation squarely on the Marxist analytic table, we need a more specific way of evaluating logics of contestation beyond this basic division into first contradiction and second contradiction resistance – particularly since the universalist alternative (seeing the minority and majority world united in one big happy human family floating along on planet earth) involves an unacceptable perpetuation of Occidental myopia about neo-colonialism.

Not only is the 1st/2nd contradiction division not reflective of the cross-sectoral complexity of many social movements and the daily lives of individuals, but it tends to over-emphasize the importance of degraded conditions in the production process, minimizing the exhaustion of resources that occurs with the ubiquitous growth drive. While the rising costs of the conditions of productions are an important factor underlying environmental crises, the expansion of commodity production itself is deeply implicated in biospheric exhaustion. Strange aptly summarizes this critique:

> What, in essence, makes capitalism unsustainable in environmental terms is not merely its despoliation of the conditions of production – capitalism's 'dirty secret' according to Wallerstein. The pollution of the conditions of production is a problem common to all industrial systems. Rather, it is capitalism's need to commodify everything, to sell and produce ever greater quantities of commodities and to deepen the commodity form where it already exists that forces it to destroy the environment through depletion (2000).

When the commodification drive is left unaddressed, pervasive anthropocentric assumptions about infinite growth and an ever-expanding consumer universe are also left untouched. The commodification impulse encourages humans to remain at the centre of their moral universe – an ideology that is fostered on a daily basis by consumer culture and its associated media.[12] Put differently, commodification is the economic engine that drives the ideology of anthropocentrism, discouraging development of ecocentric social systems that maximize autonomy for human *and* non-human species. Furthermore, if a green critique is limited to challenging the polluting effects of industry in the 2nd contradiction, forcing industry to clean up its act and address 'externalities' of the production process, growth will continue apace, even if it is a 'greener' growth. This suggests that a critique of capitalism's destructive metabolism with the biosphere must go beyond pollution and environmental regulation to include a fundamental challenge to the growth imperative. This requires recognition of embeddedness of the human species in a larger biotic community – an awareness that fundamentally challenges cornucopian assumptions of infinite expansion.

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[12] In McKibben's creative book, *The age of missing information* (1993), he watches all of the television broadcasted over a 24 hour period, and compares it to the lessons learned from 24 hours spent climbing a mountain and sleeping under the stars. After watching over 1000 hours of taped television, he concludes that there is one central message common to all of the broadcasting available: you are the centre of the universe.

ii. Socialisation and the logic of exhaustion

☙ While not fundamentally opposed to O'Connor's work on contradiction and past writings on accumulation crisis (see O'Connor 1984), Kees Van der Pijl's contribution to the ecological political economy literature offers a complementary framework for understanding the socialisation of environmental 'externalities', and how this works to facilitate further economic growth. Given the tendency to reify globalisation as a historical inevitability, or a remote 'evil empire', it is important to develop analytic tools that allow for greater subtlety than a uni-dimensional analysis of commodification as a totalising trend. This alerts us to the contradictions and cooptation inherent in dialectical struggles for social change (Frank 1997), and sensitises us to the ways in which further commodification can ironically rely on de-commodification and state regulation.

Van der Pijl (1998) identifies an important dialectic between commodification and socialisation (*Vergesellschaftung*) that builds on the work of Marx, Weber, and Habermas. While the commodification drive is critical to our understanding of ecological degradation, its dialectical partner, socialisation, is often underestimated. Socialisation can occur through capital accumulation or state action, and is defined (somewhat cryptically) by van der Pijl as "webs of complex quasi-organic interdependence in which the initial division of labour implied in exchange becomes objectified in knowledge, machinery, and organisation" (1998:8). More concretely, we can understand the concept of socialisation as expanding on Polanyi's notion of social protection, being fundamentally shaped by class struggles, but also including the dystopian elements of social control represented in Weberian rationalisation, Foucault's "power/knowledge" matrix, Orwell's 'big brother', and Huxley's *Brave New World*. Socialisation includes phenomena like universal health care and unemployment insurance, but also includes elements that facilitate and expand commodity production: corporate planning, state-sponsored education, and the modern penal system (van der Pijl 1998:15). Socialisation paradoxically facilitates capital accumulation, but also tends to intrude on the invisible hand, pushing the "logic of control, organisation and planning further into the sphere of the market, even imposing it on capitalist relations of production as such." (van der Pijl 1998:20).

Socialization processes are intimately related to knowledge production and social regulation, reminding us that late capitalism is not a simple capitalism of small-scale free market interactions. Social regulation is a critical part of late corporate capitalist expansion, characterized by a religious-like faith in markets as a regulatory device (McMurtry 1998; Berry 2002), yet dependent on large-scale social planning.[13] This has created a "total economy" where all life forms are potentially private property, have a price, and are up for sale – an economy that lends itself to the development of a "total government" (Berry 2002:19-20). While Foucault rightly identified the growth of disciplinary power with the expansion of regulatory knowledge, this knowledge is not exclusively diffused or capillary. It also continues to behave in the classic context of juridical, top-down power that concentrates itself in powerful bodies like economic actors, institutions, and states that enjoy the sanction of international legal authorities.[14] Modern science makes it ever more possible to shape and alter our natural environment, yet the consequences, or 'risks' of socialisation efforts are less known, and more complex than ever before (Santos 1995:9; Beck 1992; McKibben, 1999). In short, socialization is not a uniform or united process, nor is it a functionalist expression of capitalist teleology. The risks engendered by highly complex eco-social interventions (e.g. genetic modification, global warming) are highly uncertain. The regulatory power of socialization is both disciplinary and juridical; it is not a simple-handmaiden of capital, nor is it a process that individual capitalist interests can completely control. At the same time, highly powerful planning and regulatory bodies exist: transnational corporate structures, international charter organisations like the WTO, and state agencies like the United States Securities and Exchange Commission.

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[13] This has become evident recently with the wave of corporate accounting fraud in part resulting from the deregulation of financial markets; even right-wing publications like the *Economist* are calling for a greater regulative role in US capital markets.

[14] Santos argues that Foucault "is wrong in assuming that disciplinary power and juridical power are incompatible. The autonomy of law and science vis-à-vis each other is obtained by isomorphic transformation of the former into an alter ego of the latter" (1995:4).

Because socialisation is an inherently contradictory process, it is impossible to speak in simple functionalist terms about the prerequisites of capitalist accumulation. On the one hand, socialization implies a logic of central organization and planning necessary to facilitate market expansion. On the other hand, the structures of socialisation are continually in battle with competitive profit strategies that seek to retract and rescind costly collective structures that increase tax burdens (van der Pijl 1998:8). A concrete example of how socialisation manifests is through battles over the welfare state. While the welfare state was extended to protect labour from the ravages of straight market fluctuations, and thereby provide capitalists with a more stable labour input into the production process, the pressure for profit maximization has also meant the partial dismantling of these welfare state structures since the late 1970s and early 1980s. Ultimately, the reforms of the 'great transformation' have run up against the cost-cutting imperative of neo-liberal ideology – a battle which is far from over, and which involves the active struggles of labour movements to preserve hard won gains of previous eras.

Because socialisation is always in tension with commodification, as well as the critical dimension of human agency, outcomes cannot be predicted, or simplistically assumed to be a function of capitalist growth imperative. More specifically, it is not clear to what extent eco-social crises will create a renewed wave of socialization efforts:

> . . .there is no historical necessity which will assure that [social dislocation and the ongoing destruction of the biosphere] will usher in a functioning new order to replace the old, or that it will do so in time. Powerful ideological processes such as fetishism, which turn the capitalist economy into a quasi-natural phenomenon that cannot be interfered with, stand in the way of democratic regulation (Van der Pijl 1998:9).

When the state and social life work to 'socialize' and subsidize ecological deficits, capitalist structures may protect commodification opportunities by 'collectivizing' and subsidizing 'externalities' like atmospheric pollution, soil erosion, and other degradations of the commons. For example, wildlife in North America was at the verge of extinction in 1900; bison, deer, elk, song birds, shore birds, and predators had all been decimated (Rowledge, Geist, and Fulton 2002:A15). Government recognized the role of industry destroying the commons, and a ban on commercial trafficking reversed the problem continentally (ibid.). Today, however, the preservation of a wildlife commons has allowed for a $150 billion industry to develop in wildlife industries such as camping, hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching. The wildlife commons again teeters on the edge of extinction due to new threats posed by the domestication of wildlife and the fatal diseases this has spread, particularly TB and chronic wasting disease, which spreads from game farms to wildlife populations (ibid.). The lesson: the preservation of commons can work to serve private interests, and does not ensure long-run survival once industry is allowed back into commons management.

While we want to resist functionalist, deterministic arguments about capitalist degradation, and appreciate the ongoing dialectic between commodification and socialisation, regulation and emancipation, we can also identify an overarching "logic of exhaustion" that is increasingly evident with the contemporary phase of capital accumulation (van der Pijl 1999:37; Santos 1995:9). There are ongoing debates about the precise nature of biospheric 'limits', yet there is strong evidence to suggest that the current neo-liberal expectation of continual growth and expansion are based on shoddy evidence and ideologically driven assumptions (Meadows et al. 1992). A litmus test of this trend is the degree of biodiversity, or put differently, the exhaustion of different forms of life on the planet. The statistics tell a story of extreme intolerance for non-human life, an anthropocentric ethics of human myopia that denies the value of non-human species. Approximately 50-100 species are lost every single day, and 25% of all species on earth could be extinct in the next two decades (Flitner 1998:144). As environmental justice advocates have rightly pointed out, these species rarely exist in isolation; when they are lost, so are rich human cultures (the "songs, myths, words, ideas, artefacts, techniques") lost along with them" (DiChiro 1998, 138). A recent study in *Nature* (2002) found evidence of species extinction across the world, and in frightening, unpredictable, non-linear ways that worry ecologists (cited in Mitchell 2002:F7). The collapse of the massive ice-shelf in Antarctica epitomizes this principle of ecological non-linearity: warming occurred progressively and was faithfully charted by scientists. Yet the final result of 5 billion tonnes of ice crumbling in a matter of months represented a threshold that was unpredicted by scientists, proving that nature does not follow a straight line when it changes. Similar patterns are predicted with species extinction.

While identifying an overarching logic of exhaustion of biospheric limits is critical, this can only serve as a starting point for more nuanced investigations into the nature of degradation in capitalist systems. More specific historical analysis and conceptualisations are required. Following Marx, Van der Pijl usefully distinguishes three terrains where the imposition of capitalist discipline engenders specific forms of resistance: original accumulation, extensive accumulation, and intensive accumulation (1998:37-49). The first terrain of struggle originates around original accumulation, or what Marx referred to as 'primitive accumulation'. While there is a temporal component to original accumulation, there is a spatial dimension as well, meaning that original accumulation is still occurring as capitalism expands globally. During this phase, capitalist discipline is implemented through commodification, where use values are subordinated to exchange values, and people are disinherited from the means of subsistence. This process is often fiercely resisted:

> The conflicts involved in original accumulation constitute a first, and usually violent form of social struggle elicited by capitalist discipline . . .The very fact of being disinherited from one's more or less independent

> means of subsistence and the destruction of the entire life-world with which they are entwined, with its natural / traditional time-scales and rhythms, drives people to resistance (van der Pijl 1998: 38).

The second terrain of struggle originates around extensive accumulation (industrialism), and is associated with struggles to achieve capitalist discipline over the labour force. Under extensive accumulation, conflicts often stem from the tension between commodification and socialisation, as union leadership seeks to expand the structures of socialisation designed to protect the rights of labour – a phenomenon that crowds out straight market relations, but also makes capital accumulation more sustainable by avoiding extremes of exploitation (a phenomenon referred to as the 'corporatisation' of labour struggles) (van der Pijl 1998:42-43).

The third phase of intensive accumulation is critical, as it involves struggles for survival. Two parallel, and related issues are at stake: the long-run survival of labour power, and the life-sustaining capacity of the biosphere at large (van der Pijl 1998:43). During this phase, the discipline of capital begins to erode the "social and natural substratum" on which accumulation depends, and a range of conflicts centred on the "exhaustion" of this substratum emerge (1998:43-49). What is significant about this phase is how traditional sectoral boundaries are weakened within an overarching struggle for survival against exhaustion – a key dimension for understanding cross-sectoral imperatives for organizing against neo-liberal globalism.[15]

The logic of exhaustion manifests at different, yet interrelated levels (van der Pijl 1998:43-48). First, there is the exhaustion of labour exploitation – intensified to the point where recovery becomes difficult. The extreme colonization of the work world into personal life facilitated by new technologies that allow one to work anywhere, and promote a culture of personal exhaustion exemplified by the Japanese phenomenon of *karoshi* – dropping dead on the work floor (1998, 44). The exploitation of labour occurs in a highly egalitarian manner. While some suffer from over-work, others suffer from the condition of not being exploited (Schor 1991; Castells 1998; 70-165). As Susan George writes, "the difference between our time and Marx's is that it's now almost a privilege to be exploited.' Exclusion' rather than 'exploitation' is the key word" (1998:x). Mass unemployment is increasingly normalized: "[a]n estimated 820 million people of working age – 30% of the world's total – are unemployed or underemployed, the highest figure since the Great Depression of the 1930s" (van der Pijl 1998:46). Yet as means of subsistence are retracted and commodification expands, the need for capitalist exploitation is furthered; for many people detached from the means of production and subsistence, there seems little choice but to sell one's labour power in the market, or attain access to the means of life through the market.

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[15] A collection of case studies in "feminist political ecology" identifies a common thread across grassroots environmental movements in north and south: an overarching concern for survival (Rochelau et. al. 1996:6).

The second and third spheres of exhaustion involve realms of the reproductive and biosphere – areas that feminist political economists and ecofeminists have identified as the critical legs on which the formal productive economy stands (Mies 1986, Mellor 1996; Vennholdt-Thomsen and Mies 1999). While the state has assumed many critical reproductive duties in industrialized welfare states, the socialisation dynamic is in continual interplay with market expansion. Advances made are continually 'un-made' as market-logic and profit-maximization are imposed on the institutions of socialisation, particularly the state realm, and leaving a gap where the voluntary social sector must step in (e.g. taking care of the elderly, food banks, homeless shelters run by religious organisations). With the entry of women into the formal labour market since WWII, and then with the retraction of welfare state functions since the fiscal crises of the 1970s, the reproductive function of care has come under extreme pressure, and greatly extended the working day of many women to a breaking point (Hochschild 1990). Once state socialisation and rationalisation have degraded familial and community infrastructures of social reproduction, cutbacks of welfare state functions are particularly devastating. Other cumulative effects of exhaustion in the reproductive realm include the spatial concentration of poverty, the breakdown of family structures, and more frequent incidents of violence. Signals of exhaustion within the biosphere are numerous, and include deforestation, soil erosion, crises of fresh water, and atmospheric warming (van der Pijl 1998:48). A study published in *Nature* (2002) documented an avalanche effect of species extinction and ecosystemic breakdown linked to climate change. The last extinction wave occurred 65 million years ago when an asteroid hit the planet and wiped out the dinosaurs; according to ecologist Jay Malcolm, who conducts modelling of climate change projected into the next century, "we've now elevated ourselves to the role of asteroids" (Mitchell, 2002:F7).

The prospect of an impending extinction wave supports van der Pijl's provocative thesis that resistance to original and extensive accumulation are increasingly subsumed by wider struggles for survival (1998:49). This process of subsumption – where the contradictions of intensive accumulation create a crisis that increasingly dominates all types of accumulation – reflects the increasing centrality of ecological questions globally. Yet by recognizing different dynamics within different phases of accumulation, the framework allows us to account for the specificity of different capital-nature dialectics. Capitalist incursions into non-commodified zones of primary accumulation, for instance, are driven by an increasingly desperate search for new resources, in what some have characterised as the "new resource wars" (Gedicks:1993). Resistance to original accumulation is thus redefined as the defence of existing living environments, where life is lived within the constraints of the biosphere rather than against it. Social relations centred on subsistence production are defended for their sustainability, while social relations centred on the exploitation of nature by capital are resisted for their destructive potential (Mies 1999). Commenting on how the struggle for survival relates to the Mayan peoples of Southern Mexico, Nash writes that "the terms of conflict . . . are not so much the struggle against exploitation defined in the workplace as they are the assertion of the right to live in a world with a diminishing subsistence base" (2001:20).

A related process of subsumption occurs with the second, extensive industrial mode of accumulation. Yet here the contradiction between labour and capital becomes more embedded in wider conflicts between the conditions for social reproduction (especially state-sponsored socialisation) and the process of accumulation. While retaining a critical importance, the paradigm of pure labour struggle has been readily challenged since 1968, and the rise of new social movements. Rather than retain a strict division between old/new, labour/environment, it is more productive to frame these conflicts within a broader range of conflicts over issues of social reproduction – quality of life, length of the working day, access to affordable child care – that resonate with what Gorz calls an ecology of self-limitation (1993). While classic red/green conflicts remain, particularly given the reliance of labour on continued growth and accumulation, the logic of exhaustion has the potential to further unsettle this division, particularly in the longer-run. Resistance to cultural conformity, retraction of the public-sphere, and the deepened commodification of social relations all feed into a generalised disenchantment with the conditions of reproduction under industrial accumulation.

From a general, long-term perspective, the crisis of survival created by intensive modes of accumulation is a planetary crisis that applies to all peoples, and can be seen to subsume (without dissolving) crises of original and extensive accumulation. Yet the impact of this planetary crisis – or more specifically, the crisis of human survival on planet earth – will impact people in ways that are profoundly shaped by their positioning in global hierarchies of class, gender, and race. While an overarching crisis of survival suggests an important potential for uniting disparate movements resisting capitalist commodification, it also raises difficult questions of how resistance can be organized, and whether those with power will relinquish their privilege voluntarily in the name of long-run human survival.

Map #4. The cosmopolitan/local tension: geographic mediations

> Cosmopolitanism bereft of geographical specificity remains abstracted and alienated reason, liable, when it comes to earth, to produce all manner of unintended and sometimes explosively evil consequences. Geography uninspired by cosmopolitan vision is either mere heterotopic description or a passive tool of power for dominating the weak. Liberating the dialectic between cosmopolitanism and geography seems a critical propaedeutic to the formation of any radically different way of thinking and acting in the world.
>
> -Harvey (2001:302)

☙ We may be in the midst of a long-run struggle for human survival, but in the short and medium term, the question will inevitably be raised: survival for whom? For cosmopolitan elites who make limited adjustments to maintain access to fresh water and clean air? How will survival play out for members of the structurally marginalized fourth world, or for non-human species who have no way to articulate the impacts of further capitalist expansion on their life chances? Will the need for sustainable capitalism lead to further socialisation that addresses short term disequilibria, but which does not fundamentally disrupt the inequity and degradation embedded in intensive capitalist accumulation? (See the chapter by Johnston and Goodman, on the use of sustainable development to socialize costs of capitalist degradation.)

While many remain aware that we live in a time of global ecological crises, it is not clear what it means to develop cosmopolitan solutions to global problematics. Paradoxically, globalisation processes have encouraged a return to cosmopolitan thinking alongside a resurgence of interest in the 'local'. These two seemingly irreconcilable poles have spawned a host of conciliatory concepts, from 'rooted cosmopolitanism' to 'glocalism'. The seemingly archaic environmental phrase, 'think global/act local', has yet to be replaced by a worthy substitute, and still enjoys implicit support from globalisation scholars and activists alike.[16]

While the dusty phrases of 1980s environmentalism rarely find their way into social theory, spatial metaphors are ubiquitous. Yet as critical geographer David Harvey questions, "now that the issues of spatiality (and to some degree of geography) have been rediscovered and partially reinserted into mainstream theories and practices, what exactly gets done with them?" (2001:283). While, terms like 'place', and 'space' have become standard fare on the social theoretic menu, substantive geographic investigations have proven more elusive. Spatial metaphors often seem to take priority over spatial analysis. This is not all that surprising given that most academics remain rootless, highly mobile creatures, lacking even the most basic knowledge about the natural resources they consume and pollute on a daily basis. As Zencey writes:

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[16] In an address to the Parkland conference on 'Reclaiming Democracy', Canadian philosopher Mark Kingwell repeatedly invoked the notion of global citizenship, and

> . . . professors are expected to owe no allegiance to geographical territory; we're supposed to belong to the boundless world of books and ideas and eternal truths, not the infinitely particular world of watersheds, growing seasons and ecological niches. . . The most obvious consequence of this trained rootlessness is our ignorance and exploitative relationship to nature (1996:15-16).

Both spatial metaphors and the global/local dualism are accompanied by a lack of understanding of geographic and ecological dimensions of globalisation. This is often compensated by brilliant intellectual gymnastics, faith, and good intentions. Just as it requires a tremendous leap of faith to believe that our individual local recycling efforts will eventually produce a shift away from planetary crisis, we are encouraged to simply *believe* that our discursive manipulations of geographic metaphors – however brilliant and well-intentioned – will magically deliver

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defended the salience of the 'think global/act local' phraseology. Public Address. Edmonton, AB Canada. November 16th, 2001.

historical-materialist solutions to the crises of biospheric exhaustion. Such deliberations draw our eye away from the need for broad action on a host of pressing eco-social problems: loss of arable land, diminishing supplies of groundwater, neo-colonial debt loads, unsustainable consumption habits of Northern consumers, and general ecospheric break-down.

What is also usually missing from the 'think global/act local' dualism, and to cosmopolitan globalisation discourses more generally, is a lack of attention to geographic questions of space and scale. Despite much rhetoric to the contrary, the question of scale is "grossly underdeveloped", and the idea of place still not taken seriously by social theorists (Harvey 1996: 46, 41; Smith 1992: 73). This is partially related to the ubiquitous analytic tendency to reduce complex phenomena to a singular level of geographic scale. We see something as either a global struggle, or a local social movement; a national crisis, or a global contradiction. Impassioned arguments are made for the local, the national, or the global, without acknowledging that much, if not most social phenomena involve a complex intermingling of all of these scales of struggle.[17] Questions of analytic and material scale, like the "global" and the "local", are frequently treated as static ontological entities, obscuring their fluid construction and alteration by technological developments, social struggles and class conflicts.[18] Smith argues that geographic scales should not be seen as a harmonious mosaic – as in the profoundly banal and depoliticizing slogan, 'think global/act local' – but as a nested hierarchy embedded in a global division of labour (1992: 73, 75). For example, the global tends to involve the "scale of financial capital"; the national usually constitutes units of political and military co-operation, and legislates questions of labour; the "locality" is the scale of "social reproduction and embodies the geographical territory over which daily activities normally range" (ibid.).

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[17] Given the dominance of the 'globalist adapation' perspective, these biases occur in varying degrees. The focus is often on the global or the local, or the global/local nexus, while the national and state levels are relegated to the dustbin of history.

This book project is not intended as a definitive statement on the politics of scale, but deliberately intends to use the notion of scale to explore the complex middle-ground between cosmopolitan aspirations, and a hermetic localism. A politics of scale must avoid empty cosmopolitanism, as well as remaining wary of a localist, liberal vision of multiple, equal struggles. In this vision – insensitive to colonial legacies and neo-colonial continuity – subsistence producers are left to fight their own struggles for subsistence. Meanwhile, elite actors can choose to surf the Internet, tour the earth studying yoga, or stay home to grow organic vegetables. While the creation of sustainable core lifestyles is critical to an international social justice program, such projects do not necessarily establish a broader set of priorities for transnational solidarity work. Our planet is too small, its resources too skewed, and its problems too dire to resort to the privileged localism that only resource-rich communities can afford (a luxury often reliant on the legacy of colonial exploitation).[19]

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[18] Scale has two meanings that are related, but distinct: 1) material scale, as landscape; 2) analytic scale, which refers to the level of abstraction we use understand social relationships, regardless of their geographic nature (Smith 1992:74).

Given these considerations of scale, it is our position that an escape to an exclusively cosmopolitan narrative of global governance, or a hermetic localism of self-sufficiency are both insufficient – politically and analytically. Academics must pay attention to the social, economic, and political relations linking different scales of struggle, and remain scrupulously reflexive about the geopolitical underpinnings of universal ideals employed on behalf of distant 'others'. More concretely, what does it really mean to *think* global, and *act* local? Surely certain problems, like climate change and atmospheric pollution, require immediate global action. While we clearly need local sustainability strategies, we also need thoughtful analysis of local problems and dilemmas. And what do we even mean by 'local?' Is the 'local' a boundary for ecosystems (as per bioregional and deep ecology perspectives), or does it refer to more anthropocentric notions of human communities? In short, important scales of analysis and activism are obscured in the local/cosmopolitan dualism. We need to get much more specific about the unspecified geographic matter in the middle ground, even as we work as 'amateur' geographers in departments of sociology, political-science, and anthropology.

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[19] A sobering read on the ecological imperative to look both within and beyond our locality is Bill McKibben's eloquent and soulful book, *The End of Nature* (1999) –

But why do we need geography? It is no secret that critical geographical formulations have been popularised in academia by authors like Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, Neil Smith, and Derek Gregory. Yet according to Harvey, "popular geographical knowledge (as opposed to politically corrected academic wisdom) has not advanced much beyond the disorganized and prejudicial state in which Kant left it" (2001:278). Besides the dearth of popular knowledge, Harvey argues that sexy academic solutions of pluralistic 'heterotopias' and spatial metaphors are not adequate substitutes for rigorous research into the 'banalities' of geographic research. Despite Lefebrve and Foucault's recognition of the importance of space, the concept remains hopelessly under-theorized, and academics remain woefully ignorant of the geopolitical projects that are implicitly contained within cosmopolitan aspirations. In response, Harvey makes an impassioned plea for an ambitious geographic research program that exists dialectically with cosmopolitan normative structures.[20] Methodologically, such a project defies disciplinary paradigms and seeks to unify social theory, historical narratives, and geographic spatiality. As Harvey concludes:

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compelling and disturbing read today, over twelve years after his first warnings on the irreversibility of global warming.

[20] The idea of embracing the geographic middle ground between cosmopolitanism and localism has important gendered dimension that Harvey does not mention. Tracing the work of Simon Weil, Rosa Luxemburg, and Hannah Arendt, philosopher Andrea Nye find a common thread in these women philosophers, and in a broader tradition of women's' thought, she find that "what holds together a search for wisdom on these questions is the very refusal of abstracted argument and an insistence on constantly returning to painful experiences which provide reference and which provoke and energize passionate thought. At the end of the twentieth century there is a great need for such a thinking, which is practical and theoretical, engaged and general" (1994:xix).

> a meaningful cosmopolitanism does not entail some passive contemplation of global citizenship . . . It entails a political project that strives to transform living, being, and becoming in the world. This obviously requires a deep knowledge of what kind of geographical world we are intervening in and producing, for new geographies get constructed through political projects, and the production of space is as much a political and moral as a physical fact. . . The cosmopolitan point is, then, not to flee geography but to integrate and socialize it. The geographical point is not to reject cosmopolitanism but to ground it in a dynamic of historical-geographical transformations (2001:305).

Harvey's call to geographic arms makes clear that while we can be wary of abstract cosmopolitanism, we can't simply reject the idea of cosmopolitan aspirations in favour of the 'local'. At the same time we dialectically and strategically reference universal ideals, we need to simultaneously embrace our socio-ecological roots, especially since this is the form that moral questions are usually packaged in (Smith 2000).

In the final section of Harvey's manifesto for a dialectic between cosmopolitanism and geography, he insists that "geographical knowledge is too broad and too important to be left to geographers" (2001:303). Inspired by such interventions in critical geography, this volume is primarily made up of non-geographers that defy disciplinary boundaries, and hope to move beyond empty spatial metaphors. While there is substantial disagreement on strategies and priorities, the authors all explore ways of putting geographic and historic flesh on the bones of cosmopolitan aspirations. This doesn't take place within neutral territory, but within a larger context of understanding how peoples striving to protect the social, political, and ecological commons must contend with the intrusions of neoliberal market logic into multiple places: "the household place, the workplace, the marketplace, the community place, the citizenplace, and the worldplace" (Santos 1995, 49).

The first section of the book aims to expand our social theoretical understanding of place and scale in light of these debates on locality, cosmopolitanism, and ecological exhaustion. While different authors prioritise different scales of analysis and action, they all migrate towards the liminal space between cosmopolitan emancipatory narratives, and practical, lived aspirations for sustainability and social justice. These themes of section are further developed in section two, which uses case studies to empirically document specific struggles to resist enclosure through a defence of specific places, bodies, and landscapes.

Chapter 4

ECOLOGY II

In Chapter Two I argued that for theoretical constructs to be useful, they must have a relationship (albeit not a perfect, ontologically simplistic relationship) to the resistance generated by the expansion of global capitalism. In this chapter, I sketch out the shape of two competing paradigms: sustainable development, and the commons. Both worldviews have a close relationship to social actors – some pro-capitalist, others not – and are engaged in a struggle to define, and remedy eco-social crises resulting from global capital accumulation. The comparison between sustainable development and the commons will shed light on the ideological engines driving the anthropocentric growth imperative outlined in Chapter Three, as well as suggest possibilities for a new ethical common sense based on ecocentric principles. The mainstream sustainable development discourse has become deeply complicit with the goals of global corporate capitalism, and corporate actors have come to enthusiastically embrace goals of sustainable growth and profits. The counter-paradigm of commons is not a talisman precluding corporate cooptation, but represents a different way of diagnosing ecological problems, relating to the biosphere, and conceptualising social change.

Contesting ecological exhaustion: from sustainable development to the commons

> Perhaps our most salient observation is that this renaissance of the ecological commons marks a turning point in ecological politics.
> -Goldman (1998:7).

❧ While environmental awareness has grown amongst core citizenry, the desire to achieve sustainability in the biosphere continues to be subordinated to a short-

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to ecological breakdown, and for privileging a response that is multi-scaled *and* rooted in the local. This argument is based on an aversion to two common polarities: 1) postulating cosmopolitan managerial ideals (to be injected into the ignorant masses) and; 2) the romanticization of sacrosanct localities.

The commons is not a panacea for the problem of long run human survival, but rather, crystallizes an emerging worldview of ecological resistance to a modern ethos of commodification and control. This partly explains why radical social actors increasingly speak of reclaiming the "commons", whereas the language of sustainable development has become further entrenched as a corporate response to crises of profitability. Our goal is not to list all usages of "commons" discourse by social movements and academics, nor do we attempt to document the corporate cooptation of sustainable development. Instead, our aspirations are limited to using a social theoretic methodology to explore the normative potential of this discursive shift towards commons, while raising critical questions about the viability of a commons praxis beyond the locality.

I. Exhaustion, enclosure and paradigmatic shifts

> ...the modern book of nature ... is written according to the principle of the market and the principle of the state, and in the language of the cognitive-instrumental rationality. It is certainly not written according to the principle of the community and its founding concepts of solidarity, participation and pleasure, and not in the language of either the moral-practical or aesthetic-expressive rationality.
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> -Santos (1995:37).

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of the Kyoto accords on global warming – the economic costs to Americans would evidently be too great for the wealthiest country on earth to bear. A paradox emerges: growing concern for the increasingly visible symptoms of biospheric breakdown, uneasily coexists with a further "enclosure" of the eco-social commons.

Enclosure is characterized by heightened efforts to intensify and globalise a capitalist mode of accumulation. Yet enclosure is not simply about the extension of private property. It is a characteristic of not just capitalism, but modernity more generally. Enclosure is both a materialist and a moral concept, extending the colonisation of modern forms of control, commodification, and instrumental rationality to increasing domains of the lifeworld (Smith 1997:343). Genes, plant matter, body parts, infants, and subsistence ways of life all become subject to the logic of commodification, the application of instrumental rationality, and the regulation of the market. While the speed of enclosure processes have intensified with globalisation, its basic tenets remain constant elements in a hegemonic modern paradigm, rooted in the expansion of global capitalism from Europe outwards (Santos 1995:8-9).

Garrett Hardin's seminal 1968 article on the "the tragedy of the commons" suggested that the enclosure of common grazing land in late 17th century England was a matter of "progress". Using a parable of the over-grazed sheep pasture, Hardin implied that the commons represented a resource with unrestricted and unmanaged access that was destined to be over-used by myopic rural peoples.[1] Preservation of these scarce resources could only occur by exclusion, in particular, market relations that more efficiently regulated access to natural "capital". In Hardin's famous words, "freedom in a commons brings ruin to all" (1968, 1244).

Revisionist readings redefine the commons not as unregulated resources, but as small scale resource pools managed by communities (e.g. Manbiot 1998). From this perspective, the "real tragedy" of enclosure occurred (and continues to occur) when community modes of regulation were subverted to market regulation and instrumental reason, and "a relatively adaptable and stable system of subsistence and a set of values tailored to particular places became subject to commercial and managerial control at a distance" (Smith 1997: 342). It is not necessary to romanticize feudal life or idealize a lost pastoral past to recognize modernity's tendencies towards centralization, bureaucratisation, and violence (Sayer, 1991:154; Esteva & Prakash 1998:163-168; Livingston 2002; Bauman 2000), alongside a relentless process of capitalist commodification (Wood 1999). Market enclosure is not only linked to the loss of communal resource rights in the English countryside, but has always had global implications; directly connected to the great famines of the late 19th century, where colonial expansion and the encroachment of global markets worked in tandem with el niño drought trends to claim the lives of as many as 50 million people (Davis 2001:7).

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[1] In later writings, Hardin concedes that by using the term "commons" in the original 1968 article, what he was indeed referring to was "unmanaged commons" (1998, 684). He argues that managed commons could take on two forms – "socialism" or "free enterprise" – a typology which ignores objections made by numerous development critics and community advocates on the possibility of local, community modes of regulation. As Clark writes, "in our Post-Hardin enthusiasm for establishing property rights and access rules, we tend to forget that open access to resources held in common has long been central to the livelihood of many of the Earth's people, especially poor ones. The very acts of exclusion through which Hardin sought to save the commons and others sought to

Enclosure in contemporary risk societies creates a further paradox: a paradigm of commodification and control is hopelessly unable to manage the shadow of its own progress (Beck 1991:8-9). Corporeal pathologies of industrialized life are only the most visible sign of this shadow, taking the form of rocketing rates of cancer, heart disease, mental illnesses, and alarmingly advanced pubescence linked to the widespread industrial usage of hormones.[2] This gives contemporary conflicts an undeniably moral tone, given that they involve a violation of basic citizenship rights to "life and freedom from bodily harm" (Beck 1991:8-9).

While the specific language of enclosure is not always used, numerous authors, activists, and public intellectuals have spoken of a need for a paradigmatic shift away from the unsustainable commodification drive of modern capitalism (Marcos 2001; Brecher et al. 2000:75; Rees 1995; Capra & Spretnak 1984:xix; Capra 1995; Ayres 1998). The question then arises, what would this emerging

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capture the commons' resources for their private use have often had devastating consequences for those excluded" (1998:1).

[2] For a powerful feminist analysis linking breast cancer to industrial contaminants, see Ehrenreich (2001). Recent reports have also linked the onset of pubescence to the widespread usage of industrial hormones, found in everything from factory-farmed meat to shampoo (which can contain as much hormone as a low-dose estrogen patch) (Shafiz Qaadri, "A Growing Concern," *Globe and Mail*, 18 June 2002, R5.)

paradigm look like? What would be its key elements? While is impossible to comprehensively sketch the nature of the societal transition, glimpses can be obtained through focussed studies, which Boaventura de Santos carries out in his ambitious, and far-reaching study of legal codes in a paradigmatic transition (1995). In this chapter, such 'glimpses' are garnered through a juxtaposition of two major ways of addressing eco-social crises: sustainable development and the commons.

Comparing one paradigm (sustainable development) with its paradigmatic challenger (the commons), requires some discussion of the nature of power and social change. The matter is not as simple as replacing one way of life with another. Although there is an emerging consensus on the need for change away from unsustainable capitalism, neither modernity nor capitalism has ever succeeded at being a monolithic tale of uniform exploitation. From the solitary musings of Thoreau, to the romantic poets' odes to nature, to the conservationism of John Muir, to recent strands of ecofeminism, powerful counter-currents have served to challenge dominant narratives of instrumental-reason and exploitation. A counter-paradigm exists as a ghostly shadow, often more clearly revealed through the musings of poets or the whisperings of revolutionaries than through the managerial commands of bureaucrats or academics.[3] In his analysis of populism Luke pinpoints the need to identify:

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[3] As subcomandante Marcos of the Zapatista Army for National Liberation wrote, "We didn't look out through the world through a newswire but through a novel, an essay or a poem. That made us very different" (2001:78).

> polychromatic possibilities lying latent within this organizational monoculture, either as suppressed alternatives or as subjugated knowledges, possibilities for creating different modernities that would rely more on personal empowerment, not corporate empowerment; local community, not national solidarity; individual producership, not personal consumership; and popular self-reliance, not bureaucratic entitlement (1996:16).

Any paradigmatic sketch is admittedly provisional, ongoing, and partial. As Santos writes, "we can only speculate about the precise configuration of the dawning paradigm. Such speculation is, of course, based on the signals emitted by the crisis of the present paradigm, though they do not determine the outcome" (1995:22). Such conceptual tools are unavoidably limited by the perspective of their author, yet they are defensible when presented not as 'solutions' in the positivist sense of social scientific research, but as heuristic devices designed to shed light on the complexity of eco-social interactions. An ideal type conceptualisation is specifically designed to aid the comparative enterprise (Weber 1992:23). Comparing ideal types of sustainable development and the commons can help delineate the shape of an emerging counter-paradigm, and aid the conceptualisation of an ecological resistance that is not simply oppositional, but provides institutional and material alternatives to an unsustainable capitalist order.

At its best, social theoretic work transcends theory/practice distinctions, and helps us keep out eye on the ball. Here, 'the ball' is seen as the ecosphere within which all human life is inevitably embedded – a fact that seems obvious enough, but which is deeply obscured through modern capitalist ideologies. This central insight of ecocentric social theorizing (Eckersley 1992; Fox 1995) reminds us that while human species might have unique potentiality for abstract thought and linguistic development, this does not transform us into 'ideal' creatures who lead solitary existences in the reified realm of ideas and imagination. The materialist insight of Marx still holds: humans are constrained not simply by ideas, but by everyday habits, consumption preferences, modes of transportation, and ways of life that are profoundly unsustainable (see Fox 1985:322). As Beck writes, "[w]hile one's heart may beat Green, one's mind and routine often enough continue in old habits" (1991:11). To contend with such complexity, we juxtapose sustainable development with an increasingly popular language of "the commons". The goal here is not provide an exhaustive listing of the usages of these concepts, but to shed light on the critical qualities that differentiate two major paradigmatic approaches to eco-social crises.

II. Sustainable development

Corporations – like plants, animals and ecosystems – must be concerned with their own survival and improvement. They cannot afford to live only for the moment. They must continuously evolve, to ensure they have a viable future. That's why Monsanto, and a

> growing number of corporations like ours, have begun to take more than a passing interest in biodiversity. . . . We are staking our future on the concept of sustainable development . . . by pursuing a business model which allows us to address the *two imperatives of growth and sustainability*.
>
> -Hendrik Verfaillie, President of Monsanto (cited in Sklair 2001:225).

☙ To make sense of this paradox of environmental concern combined with capitalist enclosure, we must first describe a sustainable development historic bloc that has effectively integrated a capitalist growth imperative with an increasingly popular environmental consciousness. Sustainable development is arguably one of the "world's most unquestioned environmental philosophies" (Luke 1997:75), and covers a range of writings, positions, and policies that defy easy synopsis (see McManus 1995). What we will emphasize here, in an admittedly cursory fashion, is how the sustainable development discourse has been relatively complacent towards the instrumental rationality and market regulation so characteristic of modern capitalism – what we can refer to in short-hand as a paradigm of commodification and control. Furthermore, sustainable development tends to bifurcate into two limited units of analysis – the global, and the individual green consumer – leaving key scales of political-economic struggle unarticulated, and depoliticised.

The story of sustainable development begins with class struggle, although not in the stereotypical sense of labouring men working in dusty coal mines. The dominance of scientific rationalisation and market regulation that characterize global capitalism are intimately related to a middle class grouping that we will refer to as the *cadre class*, following the analysis of van der Pijl (1998). The cadre class has historically gone by many different names: the new petty bourgeoisie, the middle class, professional-managerial class, the "new class", and global resource managers (van der Pijl 1998:137; Goldman 1998; Luke 1999:3-7; Lasch 1995). Different authors give the class different emphases, but the key point for this discussion is that the cadre class serves as the primary agent of socialisation under late capitalism, and is responsible for the "planning and the propagation and monitoring of social norms" (van der Pijl 1998, 138).[4] Norms of socialization are not randomly assigned, but operate as a dialectical partner to the commodification drive. As the managers of socialization, the cadre class reacts to, and subsidizes ill effects of the market as it encloses social and ecological commons. This socialization process occurs through a variety of mechanisms – from state-sponsored schooling, to welfare provisions, to pollution controls – that may in fact, contradict the profit-making imperative of businesses. Socialization measures are designed to ensure the longer-run survival of capital accumulation. In informational societies, socialization is intimately connected to the regulatory role of knowledge, and represents the increasing division of late capitalist societies into two general classes: those "symbolic analysts" who work fluidly within power/knowledge frameworks, and those who are primarily on the receiving end of these managerial structures (Luke 1999:5; Lasch 1995:35).[5] When dealing with ecological risks, such knowledge takes on a particular significance. While wealth and riches can be appreciated by most people, a division of ecological risks often depends on one's ability to comprehend and analyse complex data, scientific procedures, and legal apparatuses. The role of 'experts' grows alongside risk (Beck 1991:10).

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[4] Socialisation is a historical process described in Chapter Three, and as the dialectical counterpart to commodification, involves the prioritisation of social regulation over emancipation (Santos 1995). In ethical terms, socialization involves "interpellating the individual into an already given social framework and promulgating a top-down set of values to be internalised rather than letting values form and operate from the bottom-up by communal participation" (Smith 1997:344).

The cadre class are granted authority from the ruling class, and should not be equated with a transnational bourgeoisie (van der Pijl 1998:139; Luke 1999:3; Lasch 1995:34). With the increasing complexity of knowledge within informational-industrial capitalism, there is a necessary division of labour that supports a degree of cadre class autonomy. While independent, the cadre class generally struggles to maintain social cohesion as capital accumulation exhausts the natural and social substratum. Regulatory knowledge is prioritised, since the cadre class "view society neither as a terrain for individual self-realisation, nor as an oppressive structure to be resisted, let alone revolutionised" (van der Pijl 1998:146). The cadre class is made up of specialists, and rationalists. They are pre-eminently modern, and prioritise the instrumental rationality and logic of general systems analysis (van der Pijl 1998:141-2). Their basic assumption is a technocratic one: namely, that "social problems can be solved like mechanical ones – by technicians, experts, and/or administrators", an outlook which tends to feed a "professional arrogance towards the mass of the population" (van der Pijl 1998, 143). System managers espouse an ethic of mobility; they tend to be a mainly transient, cosmopolitan class that shares lifestyle niches, but not a defined, or committed sense of place (Lasch 1995:40). Most importantly, while this class may profess and demonstrate a genuine commitment to the environment, they also share a commitment to the belief that proper managerial techniques can abate the most serious problems of capitalist accumulation's effects on the biosphere. Sustainability indicators can be developed, and the problematic nature of environmental 'externalities' remedied.

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[5] Following Manuel Castells, I distinguish between information societies, and an "informational society". While information is critical to virtually all cultures, an "informational society" is a more specific phenomenon related to globalisation, and distinguished by "a specific form of social organization in which information generation, processing, and transmission become the fundamental sources of productivity and power, because of new technological conditions emerging in this historical period" (1997, 21).

While the cadre class possess an interest in long-run capital accumulation, their functional independence from the transnational bourgeoisie means that they are simultaneously able to recognize systems of instability in biospheric systems. This became evident in the late 1960s, when environmental degradation was first explicitly posed as a question of human survival (Dryzek 1997; Eckersley 1992:11-16). Rachel Carson's best-selling critique of the chemical industry, *Silent Spring* (1962) raised serious questions in the public realm about the compatibility between corporate capitalism, and social and ecological health. With the oil shocks of the 1970s, non-renewable resources were increasingly seen as breaching the point of exhaustion. Across a wide range of areas the exploitation of the environment was seen as outpacing the regenerative capacity of nature. The ecological imperative was to conserve what was left of 'nature'. The idea that there might be ecological limits to capitalist expansion gained discursive prominence with the publication of *Limits to Growth*, an influential publication sponsored by the Club of Rome (Meadows et al. 1972). The survivalist perspective was vociferously opposed by corporate elites, who used strategies of environmental blackmail setting jobs against the environment, and aggressively intervening to discredit the doomsday analyses of ecological breakdown (Sklair, 2001:201, 203-4).

Realising that ecological crisis could not be simply wished away, corporate lobbyists in set about proactively creating the agenda for a form of sustainable development that was compatible with sustainable capital accumulation. The Union Carbide cyanide poisoning in Bhopal in 1984 – killing between 15,000 and 20,000 people – was a key event sparking this corporate rethink (Sklair 2001:201). The poisoning happened as the World Commission on Environment and Development was in session, and had a major impact on the corporate response to the Commission's Report. This was combined with the threat of government regulation, as in the 1980 US Superfund legislation that attempted to shift 'externalities' onto corporate polluters (Sklair 2001:199-202). A powerful and effective lobby effort mounted by the US corporate sector emerged to set the tone of environmental socialization processes. Deindustrialization alternatives were concomitantly marginalized, and replaced with an agenda for industrialization that considered environmental limits (Sklair 2001:201). The resulting sustainable development historic bloc represented an alliance between the "transnational capitalist class and their representative organizations", alongside key elements of the transnational environmental elite (Sklair 2001:210). In Sklair's words: "big business mobilized a sustainable development historical bloc against what it saw as a threatening counterculture organized around the powerful idea of the singular ecological crisis" (2001:206).

Perhaps because of its ability to minimize the tension between capitalist expansion and planetary survival (Brecher et al. 2000:52), sustainable development discourse today has become "arguably the dominant global discourse of ecological concern" (Dryzek 1997:122). After several years of deliberation, the World Commission on Environment and Development provided what is now the mantra of sustainable development in the *Brundtland Commission Report,* presented to the United Nation General Assembly in 1987 (WCED 1990). The Commission defined sustainable development as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (1990:8). The assumption embedded in this definition is that 'development', or the expansion of commodification, is an inherent good for all generations. Sustainability is about sustaining *human* development, and in the contemporary context that means capitalist development, with all its embedded anthropocentric assumptions about the utility of nature for human enhancement.

Sustainability has served as a key discursive battle ground where a globally hegemonic transnational capitalist class and counter-hegemonic forces have struggled to impose their various agendas – for further accumulation on the one hand, and for biospheric integrity on the other. The struggle has been nothing less than a struggle to define the future constraints that will be placed on capitalism. While the term "sustainable development" remains contested and capable of radical interpretations (see Barkin 1998), a corporate environmentalist lobby has effectively "recruited much of the global environmental movement in the 1990s to the cause of 'sustainable' global consumerist capitalism" (Sklair 2002:206). Sustainability has effectively worked as a bridging concept, or metaphor where "in the last analysis…it is always development itself that counts" (Boff 2000:22; see also Schuman 2000:22). By creating an epistemic community and a framework of shared language, the cadre class within the sustainable development historic bloc achieved a common foundation for policy and regulation that ensured some semblance of corporate environmental responsibility, while marginalizing more radical critiques suggesting industrial development and ecological integrity were not compatible. A key component in this recruitment has been the struggle to define sustainability as an issue of transition and management, rather than one of crisis and transformation. Even within transnational environmentalist organizations, the sustainability discourse delivers a very weak, reformist message that is readily compatible with the dominant paradigm of control and commodification. Luke writes of this tendency within the *Worldwatch Institute's* discourse on sustainability:

> …today's unsustainable growth rates in unstable environments can be corrected simply by allowing all industrial metabolisms to be disassembled, recombined, and subjected to the disciplinary designs of its expert management. Enveloped in such interpretative frames, any environment can be redirected to fulfil the ends of other economic scripts, managerial directives, and administrative writes denominated in sustainability values (1997:90).

A key component of the sustainable development historic bloc is the corporate-controlled environmental associations that emerged in the late 1980s: the Environmental Management Initiative, the Business Charter for Sustainable Development, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, to name just a few. These agencies have had an extraordinary power setting the tone and parameters of public debates on ecological exhaustion, dominating public forums like newspapers, academic journals, and the Internet. A web search for the term 'sustainability' in a popular Internet search engine reveals over a million entries, yet one entry that tellingly springs close to the top of the list is provided by a British firm called *SustainAbility*, which defines its corporate alliance in explicit terms:

> Founded in 1987, we are the longest established international consultancy dedicated to promoting the business case for sustainable development… With our guidance and support, most of our corporate clients have developed stakeholder consultation processes as a central plank in their

> environmental strategies. Among the companies for whom we have helped organise stakeholder dialogues are: BP, BP Chemicals, Dow Europe, ICI Polyurethanes, Manweb, Monsanto, Novo Nordisk, Procter & Gamble and Tioxide (SustainAbility's Web Site, www.sustainability.co.uk/sustainability.htm).

The corporate environmental lobby groups' powerful impact on the emerging agenda for sustainability was particularly notable at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, more commonly referred to as the Rio Earth Summit. UNCED outcomes were severely constrained by the Business Council for Sustainability Development's lobbying efforts, and the failure to establish a clear action agenda on climate change can be directly attributed to the very successful corporate intervention in this debate (Sklair 2001:213). Corporate lobbyists made fine-tuned calculations of how much regulation had to be accepted in order to stave off more radical proposals, and these positions were later adapted as climate change regulation continued in Kyoto (Levy and Egan 1998).

Corporate environmental lobby groups very quickly gained a foothold in international organisations. A key UN initiative – the UN Commission on Sustainable Development – was by 1998 speaking the language of sustainable consumption, sustainable production and sustainable growth. Numerous other international and national bodies adopted a similar language. At the same time, there was an advancing "global capitalist capture of the environmentalist movement" (Sklair 2001:209). This capture precipitated sharp divides between 'reform' and 'radical' environmental positions, a divide and conquer strategy that lent credence to the well-funded, and burgeoning field of corporate environmentalism. Corporate-NGO partnerships proliferated, with environmentalist groups ironically (and often unintentionally) adding their voices to the corporate rhetoric. Added to the mix of political voices was the pressure put on the state and political elites to socialize the increasingly visible signs of biospheric breakdown, particularly atmospheric degradation. Another key element of the historic bloc is the sizeable consumer wing, an arena where corporate spin meets green consumerism. Green credibility has become a bankable commodity, both in terms of selling 'ethical' investment funds, and in terms of capturing the environmentally conscious consumer (Beder 1996; Luke 1997: 83; Sandilands 1993).

Not surprisingly, the corporate take on sustainability is incredibly optimistic, and takes the fundamental question for corporate capitalism off the public agenda: "[i]s global consumerist capitalism, as represented by the practices as well as the policies of the major corporations, sustainable?"(Sklair 2001:218). While it may give lip service to the environment, the discourse of sustainable development resists the suggestion that infinite growth is not possible, or that there are biospheric limits constraining social and economic reproduction. According to the hegemonic interpretation of sustainability, all is possible. According to Dryzek, this "involves a rhetoric of reassurance. We can have it all: economic growth, environmental conservation, social justice; and not just for the moment, but in perpetuity" (1997:132). The compatibility between profits and ecological sustainability is taken as an act of faith, and profits themselves are internalized in the definition of sustainability. The notion of the "triple bottom line" developed by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development epitomizes this logic:

> Sustainable development involves the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity. Companies aiming for sustainability need to perform not against a single, financial bottom line but against the triple bottom line. (World Business Council for Sustainable Development Web site, http://www.wbcsd.ch/aboutdfn.htm)

SustainAbility uses this notion of a "triple bottom line" to help its corporate clients to reorient their growth strategies, while not having to sacrifice the imperative of profits:

> As the area of sustainability evolves, we are helping to define the sustainable development agenda around what we call the 'triple bottom line'. We help clients develop 'win-win-win' business solutions which are socially responsible, environmentally sound and economically viable. As shorthand, we talk in terms of people, planet, profit. (SustainAbility's Web Site, www.sustainability.co.uk/sustainability.htm).

Sustainability indicators are symptomatic of how the sustainability discourse can be used to obscure the contradiction between capital expansion and the ability of the ecosphere to sustain itself. Bell and Morse identify a tension between the specificity of narrow, well-defined sustainability indicators (e.g. calculating the maximum sustainable yield of a particular ocean resource), and the limitless range implied by notions of social, ecological, and economic sustainability (1999:58). Overarching indicators that attempt to incorporate such complexity are less accurate, and often work to obscure systemic contradictions. The dashboard indicator system developed by the Consultative Group on Sustainable Development Indicators (CGSDI) in 1996, for example, includes three parts: 1) the status of the environment, 2) the economy, and 3) the social well being of a nation (see CGSDI 2002). The status of the environment is measured by things like the Environmental Quality Index (EQI), and the WWF Living Planet Index (LPI). Social well being is gauged by indicators like the human well-being index (HWI). The status of the economy, however, is represented by conventional indicators like change in GDP / capita – a highly dubious standard of progress in sustainability, and a standard indicator of capitalist growth and expansion.[6] The additive use of this indicator alongside environmental indicators works ideologically to obscure the very contradiction that ecological political economists attempt to address: the long-term impossibility of sustaining capital accumulation and the integrity of the biosphere.

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[6] This information is detailed as part of a software package based on the dashboard indicator system. See "The methodology used for the dashboard software tool", Retrieved June 18th, 2002 from the World Wide Web: http://esl.jrc.it/envind/db_meths.htm.

However successful the ideological formation of corporate environmentalism and the discourse of sustainable development, the crisis of ecological exhaustion is never far from view. The cadre class who design and utilise sustainability indicators are not simply capitalist functionaries. They are in a conflicted position. On the one hand, they are genuinely interested in system maintenance, and are capable of creating knowledge that explains how the logic of exhaustion threatens long-run maintenance. On the other hand, they have a class allegiance to business, and a loyalty to profits and accumulation as system end goals. This tension is clearly played out in the global visioning of sustainable development professionals, a subset of the cadre class that Goldman terms 'global resource managers' (GRMs) (1998). The GRMs dwell in the realm of 'global commons', and claim their epistemic status from that reified realm. They are expert 'world watchers' who monitor 'common' planetary resources like the atmosphere, the deep sea, and Antarctica; but as a member of the relatively mobile cadre class, often lack roots in specific places and landscapes (ibid.).

It is important to recall that GRMs, as part of larger cadre class and agents of socialization, often question late capitalism's unremitting logic of commodification. The cadre class have historically posed constraints on unregulated markets, and intervened in the interest of long-run system stability. Pollution controls are established alongside limits on carbon dioxide emissions, standards for public health and safety, and varying degrees of financial regulation. Yet within this commodification-socialization dynamic, the GRM discourse remains relatively uncritical and unreflexive regarding single-scale universalism, or the paradigm of managerial control and instrumental rationality. GRM focus on a particularly large scale of ecospheric preservation – the conservation of 'global commons'. While certain global concerns are relatively new (e.g. global warming), a focus on the global scale works to obscure the multiple intermediate scales that stratify nations, regions, classes, races, and genders. Under the premise of serving 'global interests', environmental globalism often works to delegitimise local and national autonomy while covertly promoting Northern interests; not surprisingly, this has been characterised as a form of colonialism designed to "preserve Northern 'lifestyles' while constraining freedom of action in the South" (Goldman 1997:8; Luke 1997). Sustainability professionals subscribe to a global model of sustainable management, where problems generated by Northern consumer societies are seen as requiring firmer management and regulation of Southern development, particularly when 'global commons' like rainforests (the 'lungs of the world') are at stake. Setting themselves up as global actors acting on behalf of global concerns, GRMs produce recommendations for how the South can, or should develop. They are, in this sense, the latest manifestation of north-to-south developmentalism.

As agents of capitalist socialization processes, GRMs remain firmly entrenched within the hegemonic paradigm of instrumental rationality and managerial regulation. Technological fixes, overseen by global environmental agencies enforcing the doctrines of resource managerialism, are high on the agenda for

GRMs. Harvard scientist E. O. Wilson, for example, recommends "a combination of scientific and technological innovation, abatement of population growth, and environmental education" (1999:x) as a solution to the loss of biodiversity on the planet. What is important is not so much what is said, but the causes of ecological degradation that are *not* identified: capitalist commodification, and the hegemony of instrumental rationality dealing with the natural world. Within this hegemonic techno-scientific worldview, social regulation dominated by marketisation and instrumental rationality wins out over local knowledges and community regulation. The apparatus of GRMs and sustainability discourse legitimises a monumental power-grab, and the grab is not just against the marginalized South but also against specific, situated knowledges, in favour of regulatory knowledge of markets and instrumental rationality. This is part of a "new turn in elite-based ecological politics – to globalise, depoliticize and scientise" (Goldman 1998:5). The scientism of the GRM objectifies people, rubbing out specificity and removing the possibility of grounded understanding, or emancipatory knowledge based on different rationalities and regulatory principles such as moral-practical rationality, aesthetic rationality, and community regulation.

Socialization measures have the potential to subvert the commodification drive and preserve natural resources, opening up the public sphere and facilitating democratic citizen input on ecological questions. The outcome is not preordained. In the case of sustainable development discourse, however, the actions of the cadre class appear to advance 'sustainability', as they simultaneously work to enhance profit-making possibilities that undermine biospheric integrity in the long-run. Asserting a 'global commons' and training its own experts and managers, members of the sustainable development historic bloc have found profit-making potential in the environmental crises – as consultants, experts, specialists, and planners who help articulate the now mandatory paeans to sustainable development (Beck 1991:9). Corporations are planning for the new resource scarcity, manoeuvring themselves to reap profits from eco-catastrophes. Shiva highlights the efforts of agri-industrial corporations to gain control of water supplies, particularly in the South. She quotes an astonishing passage found in a Monsanto report:

> The business logic of sustainable development is that population growth and economic development will apply increasing pressures on natural resources. These pressures . . . will create a vast economic opportunity – when we look at the world through the lens of sustainability we are in a position to see current – and foresee impending – resource market trends and imbalances that create market needs. We have further focused this lens on the resource of water and land and there are markets in which predictable sustainability challenges and therefore opportunities to create business value (Monsanto 1991, quoted in Shiva 2001: 126).

As evident in this stunning statement, corporations have realised that sustainability is bankable. As Shiva notes, "for corporations like Monsanto, 'sustainable development' means the conversion of an ecological crisis into a market of scarce resource" (2001:126). Central to this process of profiting from crisis is the 'tragedy of the commons' doctrine, which implies that commonly held resources are best protected by commodification and privatisation to prevent unrestrained communal access. From this perspective, common ownership is seen as a barrier to the efficient allocation of increasingly scarce resources, and marketisation is seen as the only sustainable solution.

While market-based regulation remains hegemonic, human societies may have reached the point at which ideologies of sustainable development cannot always paper-over cracks of ecological exhaustion, universalised eco-threats, and dissent within the scientific community (Beck 1991; Wilson 1999; Walther et al. 2002). In the same paragraph where Wilson pleads for further scientific-bureacratic intervention, he notes that despite "all the good intentions of many scientists and policy makers, the growth of human population and the depletion of natural resources continues unabated" (1999:x). While ecological exhaustion has been identified as a critical issue by scientists and policy makers alike, the key question is why change has not been forthcoming. Who, or what is accountable for this structural stasis, in the midst of ecological breakdown? Why is action not directly proportional to the size and severity of the ecological threat at hand? Managing or repressing the contradiction is ultimately insufficient – the ecological crisis is fast becoming unmanageable and irrepressible, despite efforts by the sustainable development historic bloc to present the crisis as a crisis of management (Sklair 2001:207). Although the immediate costs of exhaustion can be, and are shifted to the least powerful and most vulnerable, ecological risks cannot be co-opted, divided, and coerced into submission in the same way labour movements are through the distribution of positives (e.g. profits, consumer goods, jobs) (Beck 1991:9).

But as the socialization-commodification dialectic reminds us, a corporate-led power grab is not a monolithic 'thing', but a complex historical process. Elite planning networks, the GRMs, and their associated ideologies are not unassailable, or insulated from the exhaustion they seek to manage. As van der Pijl insists, the "the transnational planning groups prove to be not a conspiratorial world government, but class organisations, constantly adjusting to the real balance of forces confronting them" (1998:134). Hopeful signs of mobilization exist as "people become aware of the general threats to life in the milieu of bureaucratically administered security" (Beck 1991:3). Action may not come in response to the threats themselves, but as a politicised response to the inability of bureaucratic managers to prevent, or even manage these threats.[7] While the sustainable development historic bloc continues to exert tremendous influence over the shape of environmental policymaking, its hegemony is not monolithic, uncontested, or permanent. By its very nature, hegemony promotes an idealized vision of social and economic life, and its cultural leadership becomes vulnerable when it fails to deliver on its promised ideals (Scott 1985:337-8). Historically, social change has come as much from the demands arising from failed hegemonic promises and from the destructive advancements of capitalist enclosures that break sacred social contracts, as it has from revolutionary breaks in consciousness (Scott 1985:341, 346; Thompson 1993). Neo-liberal capitalism's lip-service to sustainability is increasingly challenged on multiple fronts – by communities facing loss of livelihood and national communities losing regulatory capacity over natural resources, by scientific evidence on accumulating species extinctions, by increasingly undeniable global warming trends, by elite citizens suspicious about carcinogenic contamination and genetically modified food sources. This challenge is best described as paradigmatic, and resonates strongly around the idea of 'commons'.

III. The commons

> The unfolding activities of these radical [commons] conjoin language, values, and practices in a form of life that reconstitutes the relationship between nature and culture, [a] form that rejects the monolithic logic of relations predicated upon control and consumption.
> -Smith (1997:353).

☙ While disparate, un-unified, and rife with contradictions, struggles against capitalist enclosure can be seen as part of an emerging constellation of resistance to the paradigm of commodification and control centred on a contrary logic of "commons". Goldman writes:

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[7] The Walkerton tragedy of tainted drinking water is a powerful case in point – an

> The commons – a material and symbolic reality, always changing, never *purely* local or global, traditional or modern, and always reflecting the vibrant colours of its ecological, political cultural, scientific and social character – is not at all disappearing into the dustbin of history. The contrary, we find that the commons are increasingly becoming a site for robust and tangible struggles over class, gender, nation/ethnicity, knowledge, power and, of course, nature (1998:14).

The question of the day seems to be how, and where can we reclaim the commons. While this question appears in academic treatise, commons language extends beyond the ivory tower into activist-oriented discourse. The International Forum on Globalisation publication on alternatives to globalisation contains a section on the privatisation of life, and "reclaiming the commons" (2002). As global warming becomes an undeniable reality there is increasing discussion about a "global atmospheric commons" (Buck 1998; Vogler 2000). In their critique of development, Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash identify "people's power" embodied in the struggle to sustain radically democratic commons (1998:152). An article in *New Left Review* by Naomi Klein argues that the commons is the one thing uniting the Zapatistas, anti-globalisation protestors in Seattle, the Council of Canadians, and the thousands of other groups resisting neo-liberal globalism:

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important blackspot on the popularity of right-wing Ontario premier, Mike Harris.

> The spirit they share is a radical reclaiming of the commons. As our communal spaces – town squares, streets, schools, farms, plants – are displaced by the ballooning marketplace, a spirit of resistance is taking hold around the world. People are reclaiming bits of nature and of culture, and saying 'this is going to be public space' (2001:82).

With all of the differing metaphors, concepts, and linguistic apparatuses available to evaluate the complex human-nature relationship, how are we to explain the increasing popularity of the commons language? Is this simply a sexy catch phrase that has little relationship to 'real' life, eco-social crises? Are discussions of the "commons" merely instances of wishful thinking, vulnerable to the same critiques made of deep ecology – ethical superiority combined with political naïvete? (Sklair 2001:215; Luke 1997:27; Dryzek 1997). In an age of corporate globalisation, heightened militarisation, terrorist threats, and the McDonaldization of global culture, who cares about the commons?

While the commons contains a counter-hegemonic potential that has not been fully realized and is continually in danger of being coopted as a tool of capitalist socialization, we argue that it is neither a meaningless metaphor, nor is it unconnected to practical struggles. We begin by noting that linguistic relationships are never simply 'empty' metaphors, unconnected to some 'real' world of physical plants and animals. Social constructs both shape empirical reality, and are simultaneously constituted by that reality, suggesting that the current popularity of the term is itself socially significant (Soja 1989: 25; Bourdieu 1990:130). In his work on the ethics of place, Smith forcefully resists the idea that moral spaces are simply metaphors, insisting that "our ethical architecture forbids or facilitates behaviour just as effectively as walls or windows" (1997: 341). To understand the perils of modern environmental destruction, we need an understanding of material enclosure as well as "an ethical language capable of expressing something of the moral disquiet present in environmental protest" (1997:347).

Just saying the word, "commons", is a linguistic cue about the things that all humans share in common. While humans are very different around the world, at a basic level, they all have certain common needs for food, clean water, love, intimacy, and security.[8] The word can also remind us of what we share with other species. When we think in terms of an ecological commons, we are reminded that humans are also animals – that we don't live separate and apart from nature. We *are* nature, and if we soil our nest, we have nowhere else to go. For this reason, a commons worldview is less focussed on sustaining growth, and instead strives to integrate humans back into a less arrogant position on the planet – a position of ecocentricity rather than anthropocentricity.[9]

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[8] While her methodology of data collection remains problematic, Nussbaum's list of human capacities remains a useful, and provocative account of human needs (1999).

[9] An ecocentric position is not misanthropic, nor is it a position that attempts to take on the worldview of other species. To be ecocentric, rather than anthropocentric, is to resist the tendency to prioritise human needs above all others. This subverts the ubiquitous ethical notion that human lives are better, and more worthy than other lives. As with struggles against racism, sexism or classism, combating anthropocentrism does not mean

The second part of understanding the increasing attraction to "commons" is the following caveat on power and social change. A commons worldview is *not*, and cannot be a prescriptive panacea for ecological degradation that will suddenly and dramatically overthrow capitalism. Paradigm shifts do not happen in the manner of coup d'etats of worldviews. While the paradigm of commons represents a competing viewpoint to the hegemony of capitalist commodification and control, these competing worldviews can coexist within a person, organization, or state apparatus. Furthermore, normative ideals of commons may not match the actual practice of defending a local or national commons, which can be carried out in ways that are exploitative, patriarchal, and reliant on the carrying capacity of less privileged locales.

To draw out the contrasting nature of worldviews, sustainable development and the commons must be understood as ideal types, rather than positivist empirical categories or abstract utopias. An ideal type is rooted in empirical phenomena, but is a deliberately constructed theoretical tool designed to facilitate the comparative enterprise. Using these ideal types allows us adjudicate between two very different solution sets to the challenge of long-run human survival on the planet. Commons struggles don't reject the ideal of sustainability, but tend to push for a deeper meaning by challenging a paradigm of relentless commodification and

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we can abandon our own perspective as a human being. It instead mandates that we think about how various privileges – as men, as wealthy first world citizens, as white humans – facilitate the domination of others. See Eckersley (1992:55-60) for a defence of ecocentrism against common critiques.

eco-social enclosure. In short, we argue that the idea of the commons provides the skeleton of a new ethical common sense that decentres human existence, and suggests possibilities for ways of life regulated by local communities, instead of markets or centralized state bureaucracies.[10]

When we see the relationship between commodification and socialization as a complex, dialectical process, we are lead away from teleological conclusions about the commons. This makes world of commons struggles infinitely more complex than the certainty of orthodox class struggle. While ethically superior to market Darwinism, the 'commons' is not a predetermined winner in the struggle to organize a sustainable social existence. Part of what the following discussion attempts to do is find criteria for adjudication, helping us to determine when socialization processes support the logic of capital accumulation and centralized control, and when they break with this logic to posit an alternative normative framework of the commons. While not a prescriptive panacea, we maintain that the paradigm of "commons" does propose an alternative set of values *and practices* that are important for ecocentric thought and action. A turn to the commons cannot solve the problem of ecological exhaustion, but it does represent an alternate way of diagnosing the problem, and thinking up practical alternatives. After raising possibilities for the normative potential of commons in the following section, the remaining sections identify two serious questions that trouble the commons paradigm: how to build commons beyond the locality while staying connected to a humane scale of life, and how to root a commons ethics in a material praxis.

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[10] This is not to imply that states are not vital regulatory entities (particularly in the realm of international political economy), but rather, that their role should be one of supporting, rather than subverting local autonomy.

i. Commons as paradigmatic alternative

> There exists common heritage resources that should constitute a collective birthright of the whole species to be shared equitably among all.
>
> -International Forum on Globalisation (2002:9).

☙ The need for a new paradigm stems from the fact that limited adjustments of the prevailing order cannot adequately address ecological exhaustion. As Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen write, "[i]f the central concern of all economic and social activity is not the accumulation of dead money but the creation and maintenance of life on this planet, *nothing can remain as it is now*" (1999:7, emphasis mine). Adjustments that do not recognize humanity's fundamental imbrications in this crisis will similarly have little impact on exhaustion. As Wendell Berry notes, "[t]he "environmental crisis" has happened because the human household or economy is in conflict at almost every point with the household of nature" (2002:15). The limited efficacy of minor 'tweaking' with the system suggests that groups experiencing degradation of social and natural and subsystems may feel forced to take up more transformative agendas. The crisis of exhaustion raises possibilities for cross-sectoral alliances united around a new ethics of solidarity with the life-host that supports and sustains human life. While the elements of such resistance are disparate, there are possibilities for unity around the logic of exhaustion and its associated crises of survival. This creates potential for a joint defence of a social, ecological, and political commons that are more inclusive, democratic, and award a greater degree of autonomy to human and non-human species.

As mentioned above, the biospheric need for an alternative to a paradigm of commodification and control does not necessitate its emergence. An emerging post-capitalist mode of accumulation is not readily in sight, and the revolutionary eco-proletariat continues to evade hopeful academics. While there are material grounds for developing new ways of thinking and organizing human's relationship to the biosphere, the shape of future socialisation projects has yet to be determined. Crises of profitability associated with ecological crises and terrorist challengers to market fundamentalism may generate a deepening of authoritarianism under the veneer of electoral democracy. Much depends on how the mediating, cadre class of consultants, advisers, and bureaucrats position themselves; as van der Pijl insists, "no transition to a sustainable society can be imagined in which this stratum would not play a crucial role" (1998:7). As we have seen, however, within the sustainable development historic bloc the cadre class has willingly identified with the prevailing framework, becoming the architects and disseminators for a transnationalised bourgeoisie working to "generalise norms of profitability and viability around the globe" (van der Pijl 1998:160). Yet as this strategy of accommodation runs up against the logic of exhaustion, and as the transnational bourgeoisie flounders between market orthodoxy and gated isolation, it remains unclear how this cadre class will respond. It is not clear whether they will "seek to uphold the privileges of the ruling class or, under the impetus of popular movements, feel compelled to circumscribe and look beyond capitalist discipline" (van der Pijl 1998:137).

The orientation of the cadre class is a product of wider political pressures, and much rests on the shape and strength of resistance to exhaustion. To force a break with the current logic of sustainable capitalism, counter-hegemonic forces must possess the capacity to pose a paradigmatic challenge. What would this look like? What ideas seem critical? As Goldman writes in his review of commons literature: "[h]ow are we to distinguish among the many calls for 'managing' the commons?" (1998:7). While a precise, or finite formulation of paradigmatic challenge is impossible given the diffuse nature of power within contemporary societies, two tools allow us to identify what factors are critical in a paradigmatic transition:

1) The lessons of a cracking paradigmatic edifice: the morally bankrupt corporate sponsored ideal of 'sustainable' development.
2) The human actions, values, and movements that have emerged in response to delegitimized modes of production: a renewed emphasis on communal reciprocity with an ecological life-host and solidarity with other human communities.

When this methodological strategy is followed, the resistance to enclosure and the positing of alternative modes of life emerge as two critical signposts in a paradigmatic tension between sustainable development and commons. What many disparate movements throughout the world share is a defence against capitalist enclosure. While in early English capitalism the enclosure of common grazing land dispossessed the rural poor, forcing them into factory labour, contemporary enclosure can be conceived broadly and metaphorically, referring to both an ethical and a material enclosure (Smith 1997). With enclosure, the means of subsistence (understood broadly to include human needs for pleasure, participation, and nurturing) are increasingly regulated through the market, rather than through community-based or family-based means of provisioning. In Woods' words, enclosure refers to "extinction, with or without a physical fencing of land, of common and customary use rights on which many people depended for their livelihood." (1999:3).

The phenomenon of enclosure under globalised capitalism obeys a similar dynamic to that of classic English capitalism, but with an intensification that threatens the reproduction of the social and natural substratum on which all human life depends. As a report from the International Forum on Globalisation notes, the "more essential the good or service in question to the maintenance of life, the greater its potential for generating monopoly profits and the more attractive its ownership and control becomes to global corporations" (2002:10). Contemporary enclosure expands to establish commodity rights to water, the genetic structure of living beings, indigenous knowledge, and plants through processes of bio-prospecting. Through enclosure, the hegemonic instrumental rationality of modern science dominates moral-practical and aesthetic rationality, at the same time marketization regulates increasing domains of social life. Wendell Berry refers to this enclosure process as creating a "total economy", where all life forms are potential commodities, characterized by the "unrestrained taking of profits from the disintegration of nations, communities, households, landscapes, and ecosystems" (2002:19). Intensified capital accumulation requires heightened control of reproductive resources, and when resources are held in common – as is still the case in many areas of the globe and in fundamental aspects of reproductive labour – this necessarily involves a process of dispossession, expropriation, and extinction of collective use rights.

The commons exists as the dialectical counterpoint to enclosure, and can be broadly understood as "human agency in personal, collective or institutional form which protects and enables the access of all members of a community to basic life goods" (McMurtry 1999:204).[11] In the commons, McMurtry finds a "long-buried, but still evolving solution to the planetary crisis which increasingly engulfs social and environmental life-organization" (1999:205).[12] The commons is what people do as a society to "protect and further life, as distinct from money aggregates" (McMurtry 1998:24).

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[11] McMurtry uses the term civil commons to differentiate human-based practices from the natural 'commons', writing that "it is important to distinguish between 'the commons' as nature-given land or resource and 'the civil commons' which effectively protects it, and ensures access of all members of the community to its continuing means of existence" (1999:205). While McMurtry's distinction between civil and natural commons offers useful analytic clarification, for the sake of consistency with other commons scholarship, I will refer simply to the civil commons simply as the 'commons', referring to the natural commons as the biosphere, or life-host.

McMurtry argues that it is possible to identify, and connect disparate elements that serve a primary purpose of ensuring access to the means of subsistence. He includes an extensive list of elements of the civil commons that includes well-known public goods such as universal health care, the air we breathe, shareware, universal education, common sewers, pollution controls, garbage collection, community fish-habitats, public streetscapes (1999:206-7). Interestingly, McMurtry also includes socio-cultural artefacts such as Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest, the Hindu *atman* or the Christian soul, the second commandment of Yeshua, the UN Declaration of Human Rights, indigenous story-telling, and the Tao (ibid.). These cultural variants are considered part of the civil commons "insofar as they instruct an opening of the mind towards the universal view which excludes no life condition from its recognition and response" (1999:210). They promote an opening to the suffering of others, increasing the potential to identify with the lives of distant others, and expressing a potential to see and judge that "now links across human domains of all societies" (1999:214). What these goods all share in common is their social goal (conscious, or unconscious) to maximize "universal access of community members to basic life goods" (1999:207). This does not deny the existence of ethnocentrism within local communities, but locates a potential for communal solidarity, for knowledge of the suffering and subsistence needs of the Other.[13]

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[12] Unlike standard academic approaches that identify the commons in 16th century Scottish grazing lands, McMurtry situates the ideal of the civil commons in human language use (1999:207). Language serves as the "model" and "prime medium" of the commons, as well as the "universal organizer of project imagination and understanding" (1999:207). The ability of intra-species communication serves many different life-forms, but humans' particular development of language "has lifted humanity onto another ontological plane by its second-order world of signs and concepts within which, indeed, we may by self-referential discourse live disconnected from the space-occupying world beneath" (1999:207; see also Gadamer 1998:3-6; Tuan 1989:29-31). Language serves as a commons, or communal-organized resource, because it "cannot be lost to others by others' appropriation of them for use"; it instead relies on, and is enriched through collective usage (1999:207-8).

This notion of commons as a local basis for sustainable livelihoods and as a broader basis for solidarity with the Other, is in keeping with feminist, localist, and ecocentric approaches to the economy. Feminist political-economy, in particular, aims to de-centre the formal productive realm as the epicentre of hegemonic discourse found in both neo-classical and Marxist political economic research. As Mies and Vennhold-Thomsen write:

> …there exists a different conception of 'economy', which is both older and younger than the capitalist patriarchal one which is based on the ongoing colonisation of women, of other peoples, and nature. This 'other'

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[13] This is similar to what Yi Fu Tuan poetically describes as a contrast between singing and thinking, cosmos and hearth:

> Singing together, working together against tangible adversaries, melds us into one whole: we become members of the community, embedded in place. By contrast, thinking – especially thinking of the reflective, ironic, quizzical mode, which is a luxury of affluent societies – threatens to isolate us from our immediate group and home. . . Thinking, however, yields a twofold gain: although it isolates us from our immediate group it can link us both seriously and playfully to the cosmos – to strangers in other places and times; and it enables us to accept a human condition that we have always been tempted by fear and

> economy puts life and everything necessary to produce and maintain life on this planet at the centre of economic and social activity and not the never-ending accumulation of dead money (1999:5).

This "other economy" is not a reified, or detached economic system, but deeply embedded in the ecological systems that make human life possible. While this alternate economy – what Mies and Vennhold-Thomsen refer to as the "subsistence economy" – has a long history vibrant history supporting and nurturing life, it currently serves as the invisible step-sister to the dominant capitalist production system. Its provisioning is often unnamed, hidden, and unappreciated under the hegemonic capitalist system.

While diverse aspects of the commons have a long history, under capitalist social organization their narrative is decidedly counter-hegemonic. With capitalist enclosure, commons goods are increasingly lost, and continue to lose status relative to the hegemonic commodification/control drive of global capitalism. According to McMurtry, this "common enemy" serves to unify aspects of the civil commons: "the global market threatens each and all in their universally life-enabling ideals and functions" (1999:207). The commons' expression of a "life code" stands in stark opposition to the hegemonic "money code", as expressed in the classic equation of capitalist expansion, M-C-M' (McMurtry 1999:132, 151). In more vernacular language, a viable commons "like a viable farm, protects its own production capacities" (Berry 2002:19). Not only does the life code of the

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> anxiety to deny, namely, the impermanence of our state wherever we are, our ultimate homelessness (1996:188).

commons stand in opposition to the money code, but the goal of a global market system is "to convert social life functions into severed money sequences" which further the goal of maximizing money creation, but which have "no commitment to the life host" (McMurtry 1999:212). These paradigms are increasingly found in competition, as the dominant and expanding money code rubs up against, and threatens to enclose the social and environmental life organization of the civil and natural commons (McMurtry 1999:190). This contrast becomes more clear when considered in the context of rural communities. Commenting on the failure of land privatisation 'development' schemes amongst the nomadic Masai herdsmen of northwest Kenya, Monbiot eloquently summarizes this tension between communal survival and monetary maximization:

> Changes in the ownership of land lies at the heart of our environmental crisis. Traditional rural communities use their commons to supply most of their needs. To keep themselves alive they have to maintain a diversity of habits, and within these habitats they need to protect a wide range of species, but when the commons are privatised, they pass into the hands of people whose priority is to make money. The most efficient means of making it is to select the most profitable product. As the land is no longer the sole means of survival, but an investment that can be exchanged, the new owners can, if necessary, overexploit it and reinvest elsewhere . . . For human beings, as for the biosphere, the tragedy of the common is not the tragedy of their existence, but the tragedy of their disappearance (1998, 38).

While the commons are indispensable contributors to the survival of diverse life forms, the ideology of the capitalist money sequences makes these contributions invisible and perpetuates an illusion of infinite growth possibilities – a fact long noted by feminist economists who identify the invisibility of women's reproductive labour (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999). As McMurtry writes, "astonishingly the civil commons is not recognized, lacking even a name by which to call it." (1999:204). Yet those who experience its losses are well aware of its degradation since this loss means a decreased ability to access the means of life outside the market mechanism. Whenever universal life goods of the commons are denigrated, neglected or commodified, this represents:

> a decline of life at the most ground level, and recognized as such by social members who have not internalised or have been conditioned to a rogue value programme [the maximization of the money code]. In this way, the progression or decline of the civil commons is the most fundamental social fact there is, though like the sea to the fish not recognized (McMurtry 1999:212).

While the effects of this degradation are an eminently practical matter for human and non-human species whose survival is increasingly precarious, these effects are obscured by the ideology of the dominant paradigm of commodification and control. The capitalist paradigm's moral bankruptcy is often characterized more by what it obscures than what it explicitly states, making it imperative for social theorists to unearth unspoken assumptions, and hidden texts. In particular, the money code obscures the loss of life that characterizes the money sequence of modern capitalism, which only counts gains and deficits of money capital. Elements of women's contributions to the reproduction of the labour force, for example, are depicted as invisible and unvalued work in capitalist systems, even though this reproductive work is a fundamental leg on which capitalist production stands. As Marilyn Waring famously documented in her seminal work, *If Women Counted* (1990), depletion of natural capital – deforestation, an oil spill, fossil-fuel usage – is actually referred to as a 'gain' in terms of the hegemonic capitalist logic. Yet there are competing data sources that demonstrate an inverse relationship between the maximization of the money code, and the degradation of the life code: air quality, water purity, nutrition levels, biodiversity, forest cover, soil quality, and atmospheric protection, to name just a few, have all significantly deteriorated with the expansion of global capitalism.[14]

While commons represent a historic potentiality that has been subordinated through processes of modernity, it is important to emphasize that it is not a recent human invention, nor is it a phenomenon that has ever been completely suppressed. According to Santos, modern life has been regulated according to three primary logics: the market (articulated by Smith and Ricardo), the state (articulated most famously by Hobbes), and the community (best expressed through the writings of Rousseau) (1995:23). Under modernity, however, the logic of community as a means of social regulation has been the least developed, and has generally been subordinated to the secondary logic of the state, and the primary regulative power of the market. Yet the community remains a source of normative regulatory alternatives, particularly since it is often "less encumbered by determinations and in a better position to engage in a positive dialectic with the pillar of emancipation" (Santos 1995:23). While the ideal of community does not always match the complex empirical reality of living communities[15], Santos argues that primary elements of community life have only been partially colonized by modern science, and these potentially form the basis of a new ethical, political, and aesthetic common sense (1995:40-54). For Santos, a paradigmatic shift must exhibit a new "common sense" based on a renewed valuation of community principles: *solidarity* with the human and non-human forms of life that make life possible, *participation* in the decisions and labours that affect one's life; and a sense of *pleasure* gained from re-enchantment with one's lifeworld (1995:49).

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[14] A particularly blatant example of how the money code predominates over the life code is found in the recent statement by the Biotechnology Industry Organization based in Washington; they suggested that they would be willing to use the "huge body of science" to conquer Third World diseases, but only if the proper financial incentives were put into place (*Globe & Mail* A7 June 10th, 2002). Currently, the world faces a shrinking supply of basic vaccines, since there is little profit in their production, and corporate mergers have eliminated major suppliers (*Globe & Mail* A7 May 28th, 2002). An estimated 4,000 children day each die of vaccine-preventable illnesses.

Santos' emphasis of the potentiality of community-based modes of regulation resonates with the subsistence perspectives of feminist political-economists and development critiques of Southern scholars. Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen write that empowerment in post-colonial contexts is not found through top-down development projects, but rather through a bottom-up empowerment where a reciprocity of community regulation is rediscovered and revalued:

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[15] The discrepancy between normative potential and empirical reality does not necessitate an abandonment of the concept of commons, or the related concept of community. Like

> Empowerment can only be found in ourselves and in our cooperation with nature within us and around us. This power does not come from dead money. It lies in mutuality and not in competition, in doing things ourselves and not in only passively consuming. It lies in generosity and the joy of working together and not in individualistic self-interest and jealousy. This power also lies in our recognition that all creatures on earth are our relatives (1999:5).

Because of these roots in community-based modes of regulation, the commons constitutes a type of regulation that can be seen as distinct from the realm of the state, and the market. Using alternate principles of reciprocity and mutual assistance, the regulatory principles of the commons provides an alternative to commodity exchange and marketization. In doing so, the commons addresses the origins of the ecological crisis, rather than simply its symptoms; it recognizes that a solution to ecological exhaustion cannot be found by proxy, and must alter personal relationships and ways of life. As champion of local economies, Wendell Berry, insists:

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all modern social ideals – democracy, civil society, or nationalism – the lived reality inevitably fails to live up to the theoretical ideal.

> …a proper concern for nature and our use of nature must be practiced not by our proxy holders [public experts, politicians, corporate executives] but by ourselves. A change of heart or of values without a change of practice is only another pointless luxury of a passively consumptive way of life (2001:16).

Struggles for the commons are by implication, struggles against the encroachment of global corporate capitalism – struggles for a world where markets might exist, but where they do not dominate all social relations, or become the exclusive way of accessing the means of subsistence. A paradigmatic challenge will only occur when "people take the effort to take back into their own power a significant portion of their economic responsibility" (Berry 2001:16). When this power is reclaimed, the "environmental crisis" is no longer an external phenomena of an externalised, pristine 'nature', but rather, a crisis of an entire civilization construct (ibid.).

The commons' challenge to a paradigm of commodification and control is reflected in its first official formulation. Conceived as the "common heritage of mankind", the notion of a legal commons realm was asserted by Malta's ambassador to the UN at the 1967 negotiations on the law of the Sea (Buck 1998). The concept was subsequently developed into the "global commons" and extended in varying degrees to the moon, outer space, and Antarctica. These global commons are defined as natural entities that belong to all of humanity, and at least in theory, are to be managed by all peoples for exclusively peaceful use and sharing the benefits with future generations The result in legal terms has been the emergence of a field of regulation – *jus humanitatis* – based on common law managing global commons, placing resources beyond the reach of property relations (Santos 1995: 365).

If ecological management required it, the principle of the commons could be applied well beyond these restricted realms of international law. At the 1983 Law of the Sea negotiations the US government was particularly concerned that the principles of common heritage would become a Trojan Horse establishing a "New International Economic Order" of socialist orientation (Santos 1995:367). Although resistance to its extension remains fierce, in the face of an intensifying ecological crisis, the commons has already spilled over into existing state jurisdiction; for example, the declaration of 'World Heritage' areas, and proposals to extend the commons to include energy, food, the atmosphere, and science and technology. This expanded use displays the radical and transformative potential of the term – not least as these proposals are fiercely opposed by dominant states and capitalist configurations. The U.S. remains a non-signatory to many of these international covenants (UNDP 2000:51). A high-tech corporate advertisement that criticizes the Moon Treaty for "socializing the moon", and giving Third World majority in the United Nations an "OPEC-like monopoly" is sadly emblematic of core capital's resistance to share the fruits of the earth's resources equitably amongst the worlds' peoples (as in Santos 1995:369).[16]

Yet in the face of ecological exhaustion at a global scale, the extension of the commons as a mode of equitable, reciprocity based regulation becomes an absolute necessity for human survival, breaking ground in the shape of an alternative paradigm to the commodification-socialization dialectic of globalised capitalism. Concepts of the commons make possible "credible emancipatory discourses beyond the confines of capitalist reasoning and reasonableness" (Sousa Santo 1995:265). They generate an ideological confrontation between adaptive sub-paradigmatic measures of socialisation (e.g., corporate conceptions of sustainable development) and the demand for paradigmatic transformation necessary for survival. This confrontation is reflected in forms of mobilisation, particularly as internationalised social movements and transnational advocacy networks become key agents deepening and widening the definition of the commons, and demanding that moral principles are extended beyond the boundaries of the local and the national. This resulting potential explains why, at least in legal frameworks, the commons concept has been corralled into resource domains where property rights have not been fully established, or where the technology was not in place to exploit the resources embedded in these domains. Yet as Sousa-Santos argues, the concept of the commons "is grounded on principles which, were they to be fully developed, would bring about the bankruptcy of the dominant paradigm" (1995: 365). By its very history and its refusal to be extinguished by market logic and instrumental rationality, the commons poses a challenge. It is indeed, a Trojan Hourse. But is it a challenger that is capable of making connections beyond specific realms and communities, uniting contemporary struggles against neo-liberal globalism?

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[16] The moon is a source of potentially rich minerals and alternative fuel sources,

ii. Commons beyond the local?

> What is now the anti-globalisation movement must turn into thousands of local movements...At the same time, the local movements fighting privatisation and deregulation on the ground need to link their campaigns into one large global movement...If that connexion isn't made, people will continue to be demoralized. What we need is to formulate a political framework that can both take on corporate power and control, and empower local organizing and self-determination.
>
> -Klein (2001:83).

☙ While the commons is often presented as a synonym for 'community', in this section we employ the social theoretic writings of Santos (1995) to suggest how, and why this is misleading. While the commons is ineluctably linked to the notion of locally rooted and accountable mode of life, it does not follow that the commons is reducible to a spatially fixed, small-scale notion of community. We put forward a conceptualisation of the commons that is relational, spatially un-fixed, and multi-scaled, while simultaneously rooted in face-to-face community modes of regulation.

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particularly helium-3 (He^3) (Santos 1995:368).

A key theme in Santos' work is that the normative ideals embedded in community take on a special importance in a paradigmatic transition (1995:23). The ideals of community are indelibly linked to the commons, as summarized in "the notion that local communities are in the best position to decide for themselves how to manage natural environments" (Goldman 1998:8). The imperative is to think small, against the capitalist maxim that bigger is better, and that the global is the ultimate unit of organization. Advocating a return to the local economy as an antidote to globalisation, Berry writes:

> …one also begins to see the difference between a small local business that must share the fate of the local community and a large absentee corporation that is set up to escape the fate of the local community by ruining the local community (2002:19).

The importance of community as an alternative source of economic and social regulation is inevitably related to the limitations of scale. The ideals of commons are rooted in communities and biospheres, and suggest that human life should be organized on a scale that can acknowledge reciprocity, while maximizing autonomy and participation. As Susan George argues:

> …cooperative management of common property resources and reciprocity serve enlightened self-interest *whenever one is going to remain a member of the group for the foreseeable future*. You can, perhaps, afford to cheat or be horrid to someone you will probably never see again but you can't if

> you are going to be dealing with them day in and day out. In that case, cooperation and reciprocity are the only strategies for guaranteeing your own survival, much less prosperity. (1998:xii).

This gives the scale of local community a privileged role in the formulation of a commons paradigm. While goods may be traded with distant others, this trade would be limited to the extent that it damaged or degraded local needs, or was based on the destruction of other communities' resources. Berry states this subsistence principle simply, and argues that it extends to neighborhoods, nations, and regions: "a viable neighborhood is a community; and a viable community is made up of neighbors who cherish and *protect what they have in common*" (2002:19, emphasis mine).

While locality and community are linked to the paradigm of commons, they cannot be equated with the concept of the commons. In Chatterjee and Finger's critique of global resource managers and the Rio Earth summit, they insist on the inherent locality of commons, and cast a critical eye towards global resource management's appropriation of the term:

> ..the traditional meaning of the term 'commons' is quite different from the meaning the Brundtland Commission assigns to it. The commons are usually managed by people – not nation-states – at a local and not at a global level. The commons are providing livelihoods for the people directly managing them. Basically, the commons refer to traditional

> communities who own their resources jointly and distribute their wealth wisely…The idea of global management hands over the policing of the commons and their sustainable development to a global establishment, its institutions and agreements (1994:26).

While local communities are a necessary element of commons, we insist that for the commons to serve as a paradigmatic counterpoint to sustainable development, it must transcend localism. This is not to deny the use of 'global commons' discourse in the cooptation of local environmental movements, or its tendency to obfuscate neo-colonial managerialism, as identified by Chatterjee and Finger. Instead, it is to maintain the importance of conceptualising a commons that is rooted in localities, but which can move beyond the local community, just as water and air and industrial contaminants move fluidly beyond our sensory perceptions of immediacy. While we must challenge the epistemic authority of elite "global resource managers" to impose their authority on local and national commons, a backyard localism runs the risk of parochialism, conservatism, and continued imperialism vis à vis other localities and nations.

Under structural conditions of global capitalism, a major issue is not just the reciprocal relations *within* communities, but how different communities and nations exploit one another, and how they could be related through solidarity rather than colonialism. Not only do municipalities, nations, and regions compete with each other in a neoliberal 'race to the bottom', but differentially privileged communities and nations take advantage of their privilege to live off the carrying capacities of others. Politically, this leads us to question how a local commons of wealth and privilege could be made consistent with a tranborder political agenda of reciprocity and solidarity (Goldman 1998:8).

Analytically, it leads us to question how we should conceptualise this difficult tension between scales of commons – a tension that is infinitely more complex than the classic macro/micro split, or private/public divide theorized by sociologists and political scientists. While numerous scholars have written on the tension between local/global, or "cosmos and hearth" (see Tuan 1996), one particularly insightful, and lesser known analysis is Boaventura de Sousa Santos' theory of paradigm shifts from regulatory knowledge to emancipatory knowledge (1995:25). Just as Arendt puts forward the simple proposition that we do "nothing more than to think what we are doing" (1958:5), Santos' work allows us to think through the troubling, and dangerous implications of a wilful insistence on an exclusively local or national commons, or the privileged cosmopolitanism of global resource managers managing the 'global commons'. This doesn't provide a totalising rational for commons beyond the local, but instead gives us analytical tools to recognize the dangers of essentialism of both the local, national and cosmopolitan variety.

Santo's key insight relates here to the question of defining modern thought tendencies, and their competing emancipatory possibilities. For Santos, under the dominant paradigm of modernity, knowledge of regulation has come to define what constitutes emancipatory knowledge. Emancipatory knowledge comes to be positively equated with a knowledge of order, often formulated more positively as social cohesion. The point of thinking through this understanding of our modern thought systems is not theoretical reflection for its own sake, but to gain a vantage point from which to adjudicate competing conceptualisations of commons. Modernity contains its own challengers, and generates resistance as hegemonic promises go unfulfilled. Santos identifies a (post)modern[17] counter-trend where people come to define emancipatory knowledge not in terms of social order, but in terms of a solidarity based on reciprocity. Battling ignorance is not about imposing order on the chaos of the natural world, but instead understood as a project battling colonial knowledge systems that deny reciprocity between human communities and the biospheric life host. Santos' call for a paradigmatic shift away from control and towards an understanding of reciprocity is not a lone cry in the wilderness, but echoes the calls for appreciating and understanding ecological embeddedness emphasized by deep ecology, eco-feminism and environmental justice movements (See Boff 2000; Fox 1995; Eckersley 1992; DiChiro 1998).

What is critical about this shift to emancipatory knowledge of solidarity and reciprocity – which Santos identifies as difficult, but incipient in several fields such as legal studies – is the resulting difficulty, or downright impossibility of drawing definitive boundaries around commons, whether they be local, national, or global. Advancing emancipatory knowledge requires an understanding of reciprocal communal relationships. Gaining understanding of reciprocity draws our analytic attention to the lessons of ecology and ecological social theory, which depict commons as nested entities defying the strict demarcations of geo-political boundaries. As DiChiro writes, a notion of interrelated commons "presupposes connection to and interconnectedness with other groups, other species, and the natural environment through which everyday experiences with family, comradeship and work" (1998:139).

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[17] While certain authors prefer to use the term "post" to refer to subversive traditions residing *within* modernity (see Santos 1995; Smith 1997:340; Esteva & Prakash 1994), the inevitable problems and insinuations of the 'post' label leads us to avoid the troublesome prefix. Other theorists refer to similar counter-traditions within modernity, while avoiding the over-used, and abused term (Tuan 1996:9; Giddens 1990:27-32; Beck 1998).

The implications for this type of commons analysis become clearer when we consider the implications of borders, particularly at the level of states. While state boundaries undoubtedly constitute part of our social reality, structuring access to welfare provisions and labour mobility, to deny the reciprocal webs that supersede these boundaries is to continue in a modern tradition of colonial knowledge creation. It is to occlude our understanding of state and class dependencies on distant labour and resources, as well as the historical dependencies of (neo)colonial resource exploitation. Particularly with global economic connections, and planetary environmental problems like global warming, it becomes urgent to acknowledge the fact that we live within webs of relationships linking human and non-human communities far beyond the immediate realm – to distant food producers, far-away laborers, and remote resource sinks. The poetic cliché not only rings true – no wo/man is an island – but must be extended beyond personhood to the realm of interrelated communities, regions, and states.

For a community (or the imagined community of a nation) to follow a trajectory away from colonialism and toward solidarity requires an understanding of embedded reciprocity across time and space, and the existence of multiple interlinked commons. This requires that community members and national citizens move beyond a conservative conceptualisation based on sameness and conformity, and towards greater appreciation of the heterogeneity embedded in all social life and ecological systems. This trajectory does not dissolve the local community, or national identity, but requires a notion of communities and nations that exist and interacts beyond a spatially-fixed locality – a particularly pressing point given the space-time compression of globalisation processes. This breaks the local community (and nation) out of a narrow spatial fixity, creating a relationship that Santos labels the "neocommunity":

> [a]fter two centuries of deterritorialization of social relations, the community cannot limit itself to being the territoriality of the contiguous space (the local), and the temporality of the small time (the immediate). . .The neocommunity is a symbolic sphere whose productivity does not require a fixed *genius loci* . . . The neocommunity transforms the local in a way of seeing the global, and the immediate in a way of seeing the future (1995, 27).

This multi-scaled notion of commons suggests that making connections and fostering recognition develops emancipatory knowledge by furthering understanding of an Other.[18] This demands the unsettling of colonial knowledge based on a denial of reciprocity, and the wilful ignorance of an Other differentiated by membership in a subordinated race, gender, class, and/or species. When the denial of reciprocity is understood as a trademark of hegemonic modern thought systems, it becomes difficult to think of an exclusively local, national, or global commons. It then becomes clear that for commons to have a counter-hegemonic paradigmatic potential, social actors must devote themselves to creating awareness of reciprocal relationships – with the Other of all inhabitants existing within nested commons.

This multi-scaled conceptualisation of commons recognizes the ineluctable importance of local commons and inter-personal relationships, yet simultaneously implies the presence of interrelated commons in the manner of Russian *matrpshka* dolls. Humans inevitably live within multiple commons: local commons of face-to-face communities, regional commons of water flows, national level commons of public health apparatuses, atmospheric commons, to name just a few. Form and content are inseparable to our understanding. It is inevitably limiting, and even ludicrous to understand one of these commons (e.g. global atmosphere) apart from others, just as it would be ridiculous to give a child only one of these dolls play with. What is important to emphasize is the relationship between different scales of commons – relations that are not always observable to the senses, or the untrained eye.[19] Beck suggests that there is a tremendous potential within these often-invisible connections that could foster greater understanding of how to effectively resist ecological threats:

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[18] The notion of a non-spatially fixed community goes by many different names. Whitt & Slack, for example, refer to "mixed communities", where abstract notions of community are replaced with a dialectic between human/nature interaction in a specific material setting (1994). Given the unavoidably local, spatially fixed connotations embedded within the concept of community (see Lyon 1987. 5), and our desire to include broader regional and national identities within this framework, we refer the commons, rather than to communities or neo-communities. For a critical analysis of the enduring appeal of community, see Bauman (2001) and Nancy (1991).

> There are good reasons to assume that the microcosm of daily behaviour and dealings with oneself and others corresponds to the macrocosm of threat production. Such parallels are, for the most part, unconsidered and investigated; but one can speculate, for instance, that a population takes on the drudgery of sorting garbage daily would show little tolerance for the production of avalanches of garbage, and that the dirty issue of garbage would therefore become a lighting rod for democratic anger. Conversely, one can imagine that the acceptance of the everyday brutality of traffic paves the way for accepting the next nuclear accident. Traffic policy is cultural policy: practice in accepting everything, come what may (1991:14).

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[19] An emphasis on reciprocity suggests the need for a relational model of identity and politics, where inter-subjective eco-communities are established in dialogue with nature and other communities (Mathews 1996; Santos 1995:27). Even if for analytic and policy purposes our gaze might be temporarily fixated on one particular type of commons, our understanding is inevitably limited when we reduce analysis to a particular level, depicting something as either a 'global' problem, or a local phenomena. This is what Bourdieu describes as a contrast between a *substantialist* mode of thinking that recognizes 'objective' things only observable through direct observation, and a *relational* mode of thinking that "identifies the real not with substances but with relations" (1990:126).

In short, a paradigmatic trajectory from colonialism to solidarity requires that we put aside exclusionary 'levels' of analysis, and practice holistic thinking about the commons. While locally based *communities* are a privileged site of alternative knowledge creation, participation, and pleasure, the *commons* is a broader notion that includes but is not limited to local communities. At a normative and an empirical level, the commons is a *relational* concept, with no spatial fix. The commons are necessarily relativised, involving an intersecting relationship between localities, bioregions, nations, and global flows. Interaction between the commons at all levels occurs, which mandates a consciousness, solidarity and institutional structure necessary to express these multi-scaled interactions. It is an ethical contradiction for local commons to be protected at the expense of a global commons, and vice versa. Different commons are not just interrelated but embedded inside a larger biospheric whole. The concept of the commons thus transcends the 'levels' tendency where the possibilities for 'sustainability' in one national context are defined against sustainability in others. Any attempt at managing and extending the commons in one context must be complemented by efforts to build commons in other contexts. Just as socialism in one country was perceived as a contradiction in terms, so is any idea of a democratically managed commons in one nation or community.[20]

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[20] One example of this contradiction is found in the tension between the cosmopolitan concerns of environmental movements, and neo-Malthusian frameworks that fixate on population data as a key component of national ecological sustainability. Exclusivist nationalism can blend with environmentalism to create an argument for anti-immigration policy as sustainability policy. The organization, Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population, is one example of this particular brand of nationalist

iii. Sense of commons as common sense: roots in praxis

> Understand young folks, when you put property rights ahead of human rights, understand you're tampering with nature...You see, property rights is controlled by man. Human rights is controlled by nature.
>
> -Dick Gregory (African American civil rights activist, nutritionist and comedian).[21]

☙ Maintaining a theory-praxis dialogue is a particularly pressing problem for political ecology, since a common tendency within environmental discourse has been the penchant to work in a reified realm of normative pronouncements. Dryzek comments that "[w]hat people have not done, except in very small numbers, is adopt any kind of ecological consciousness of the kind sought by deep ecologists, ecofeminists, eco-communalists, and eco-theologians" (1997:168). While the commons language reflects a normative potential within ecologically embedded human life, it remains critical to investigate the extent to which it embodies a social praxis. Is the commons simply an idealistic, normative construction, or does it articulate an emerging paradigm embedded in counter-

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environmentalism. Another more subtle example is the struggle to defend Canadian water against thirsty American markets; a struggle that is usually pitched in terms of Canadian nationalism, but which has little, or no discussion of a responsibility to redistribute water to less endowed regions. If Canada emerges as a future "OPEC" of water (Barlow 2001:24), then a discussion of ecological and political reciprocity will be a vital part of a struggle against commodification that is not simply in opposition to US imperialism, but put forwards an alternative emancipatory knowledge based on principles of solidarity.

[21] As heard on Meshell Ndegeocello (U.S hip hop artist) Track 1, Dead Nigga Blvd. (Pt. 1). Albumn, *Cookie: The Anthropological Mixtape*. 2002. Maverick Recording Company.

hegemonic actions, analysis, and values?[22] Where, and how can we observe the commons?

To evaluate the dimension of praxis would require a book-length listing of social action, in addition to a full-length exposition on the complex debates surrounding social transformation in late capitalism. Risk theory and social movement theory have both highlighted the complexity of emancipatory agency to preserve biospheric survival (See Beck 1992; Eder 1996; Jamison 1996). To challenge the crosscutting ecological problems of late capitalism requires agency on multiple fronts – across classes, genders, social movements, and core-periphery boundaries. Romanticizing poor communities, green subcultures, women, the working class, or social movements feeds a voluntaristic tendency in social theorizing, and does not help us clarify the complex interactions between institutions, material forces, and social agents in dialectical process of capitalist transformation. This suggests that a search for the singular class, movement, or agent of eco-social transformation that will "save the planet" is deeply misguided.[23] Our point here is not to essentialize diverse social agents as the carriers of the commons worldview, or worse, as the new left saviour or 'eco-proletariat'. Instead, the primary goal is to articulate a worldview shared across a range of class, race, and gender positions, while remaining sensitive to varying degrees of agency held by differentially privileged social actors.

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[22] The empirical/normative distinction is critical to this discussion. While the commons has a democratic potential as a normative ideal, living, breathing communities can be hierarchical, undemocratic, and unaware of ecological reciprocity. Thompson's study of Himalayan villages suggests that the commons operate on a four point quadrant encompassing ideal-types of hierarchy, egalitarianism, individualism, and fatalism (1998, 206). While this is an important empirical observation, it does not fundamentally negate the possibility of having a normative ideal of 'commons' that is strongly connected to an ideal (quadrant) of egalitarianism.

[23] While studies of particular social agents articulating a commons worldview are exceptionally important, they are not the focus of this chapter. See for example, Smith's work on the ethical challenges provided by radical environmentalism (2001b).

While we cannot find a singular agent of commons struggle, we can suggest several critical features that characterize this paradigmatic grouping, thereby furthering our goal of providing an adjudicating framework. Goldman's survey of the commons usefully identifies several critical factors that cut across multiple movements (1998:13-14). First, commons movements organize for social control of use-values. This does not mean that they reject all forms of commodities, markets, or focus on an entirely subsistence oriented way of life. The key point here is to maximize control over the means of subsistence for the ends of life and social justice – not profit maximization, or the pursuit of money as ends in itself. This can be seen in numerous instances in both North and South through struggles to reclaim control over key areas of subsistence such as food, land, social and culture reproduction that are increasingly subject to commodification. Just as Mayan peoples struggle to retain control over subsistence corn production (see Nash 2001), struggles over food and food security attempt to reconnect urban food consumers to a more sustainable subsistence (see Koç et al. 1999).[24]

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[24] While this ethos is stereotypically ascribed to the whitestream consumer shopping for organic produce, it is also evident in North American countercultures. Recording artist Meshell Ndegeocello addresses her critique of the money code to the African American hip hop community:

Second, commons movements are characterized by a challenge to the hegemony of technical rationality, and a reassertion of the importance of partial, situated knowledges (Goldman 1998:13-14). The dominance of instrumental rationality and market regulation are subverted in favour of community-based modes of regulation, and other forms of rationality, such as aesthetic, and practical-ethical. This insight about the importance of community-based, local knowledge and modes of regulation have been strongly validated by the contributions of environmental justice activists, whose struggles have challenged hegemony of scientific discourse, and argued for the legitimacy of 'non-expert' knowledge sources rooted in spaces of everyday living (Richardson, Sherman and Gismondi 1993). As Goldman writes, "the process of privileging certain knowledge producers is indeed a political act" (1998:8). Nowhere is this truer than for poor communities, which inevitably confront the cultural capital of 'experts' who legislate on the safety and liveability of their ecosphere. DiChiro writes that for environmental justice activists, low-income communities politicised by ecological contamination can "construct distinct meanings and definitions of 'nature' and of what constitutes proper human/environment interrelations and practices." (1998:131). Contrary to the view that impoverished communities are fated to be

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> When will we revolt against the money culture that tells us we are never good enough, that we will never have enough, that we are never beautiful enough, that we can never be whole unless we buy product x.? The powers of manipulation (advertisement) play our true selves against our fears and insecurities – and we let them.

Track 2, Hot Night. Album, *Cookie: Anthropological Mixtape*. 2002 Maverick Recording Company.

helpless victims of capitalist industrialization suffering from dysfunctional relationships with nature, DiChiro writes:

> …their knowledge of the destruction of nature and natural systems in their local communities may function to mobilize them to act on these negative experiences. This knowledge often pits them against health department experts who would claim that there is nothing wrong with the environments in which they are living. But the community activists know otherwise – they often play close attention to the changes they are living through as a result of toxic contamination of their environments. Many describe in great detail the profusion of respiratory illnesses, skin disorders and cancers that they and their neighbours suffer (1998:136).

Controlling use values and privileging local knowledge creates possibilities to move beyond oppositional *anti*-globalism, towards forms of *counter*-globalism based on concrete alternatives. In core countries, such alternatives include, but are not limited to 'fair' trade (Ransom 2001), barter systems as an alternative to money-based economies (Starr 2000:129-130), voluntary simplicity circles (Andrews 1997; Levine 1996), movements for community self-sufficiency (Shuman 2000), or downsizing as an alternative to highly commodified, labour-intensive lifestyles (Schor 1998; 1996). What links these diverse responses is an assertion of alternative values and visions for common survival against corporate globalism and a relentless commodification impulse. Expressing the commons worldview, these new modes of counter-globalism build bridges between local, national, and global issues, rooting themselves in a locality, while not resorting to an insular existence that denies reciprocal relations with others. While these activist forums are usually discussed in isolation, they can also be seen as part of a larger collective attempt at defending and extending the commons, while providing a shared basis for challenging globalised accumulation. As Naomi Klein enthusiastically writes:

> Thousands of groups today are all working against forces whose common threat is what might broadly be described as the privatisation of every aspect of life, and the transformation of every activity and value into a commodity....The spirit they share is a radical reclaiming of the commons. (2001:81-82)

Such optimism is tempered by Goldman's documentation of how the commons concept has been co-opted by the sustainable development historic bloc in a way that avoids challenging deep-seated assumptions about development and modernization (1997; 1998:9, 46-7). The looming challenge of ecological crises in the "global commons" heightens faith in top-down "global resource managers". While these global resource managers have different solutions to the commons crisis, what they share is an epistemic community based on faith in the expertise of top-down interventions, global science, and 'development' (van der Pijl 1998:3, 23). Ironically, they come to agree with feminist political-economy and ecological political economists that the sustenance of this natural and social substrata is critical to capitalist production, even if this realm is not formally included in economic calculus of value. As Goldman insists, "[m]aintenance of the commons is thus one of the legs on which commodity production stands" (1998:16), and this fact is increasingly recognized by capitalists themselves:

> …These 'defenders' of the commons (many of who are none the less in the business of expanding access to private property and surplus-value production) argue that the sustainability of private-property regimes is actually completely *dependent* upon the maintenance of non-private property of the commons (1998: 6, emphasis of author).

The appropriation of commons in the interests of sustainable profits leads Goldman to conclude that the usage of 'commons' concept by unreflexive professionals within the development apparatus has had important "instrument effects" that normalize, legitimise and institutionalise transnational capitalist expansion in the name of foreign aid and development (1998:22).

While Goldman's damning testimony documents how the commons concept has been incorporated by the socialization dynamic of a sustainable development historic bloc, it is important to maintain the other side of this dialectic – the commons as emancipatory touchstone that links a diversity of social projects geared at survival and universal access to basic life goods. A resistance to commodification, enclosure, and an ability to posit alternative projects remain key trademarks of a counter-hegemonic paradigm of commons. While the language of commons is often uttered in the discourse of counter-hegemonic resistance,[25] different language is often used, depending on the movement, disciplinary perspective, and linguistic orientation of the author. Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies speak of the turn towards "subsistence economies" (1999). Wendell Berry has put forward a similar notion of local economies based on neighbourhood, subsistence, and "thinking little" (Berry 2002; 1972; see also Daly & Cobb 1994). A recent International Forum on Globalisation publication makes a case for "subsidiarity", understood as "favoring the local whenever a choice exists", and organizing human life so that decision-making "constantly moves closer to the people most affected" (2002:12). Southern commentators, Gustava Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash write that "communities are appearing as the only viable option taking us beyond a century of blindness: limiting political imagination to the dichotomy of socialist or capitalist ideologies" (1998:161). Municipal-level activists in the United States and Canada speak of re-localization, community sustainability, and "de-linking" (Starr 2000:111; Shuman 2000; Ekins 1992).

Despite disparate conceptual schemata, an emerging focal point amongst diverse terminologies is the defence of local ways of life against capitalist enclosure and sustaining commodification.[26] What determines the counter-paradigmatic potential of the commons is the ability to subordinate market/state modes of regulation to community-based modes that maximize the life code, and move towards an understanding of solidarity and reciprocity. While numerous obstacles remain, and these two diverging paradigms uneasily coexist *within* organizations, institutions, and even individuals, this does not eliminate the presence of a commons paradigm that challenges a dominant modern paradigm of commodification and control.

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[25] The language of commons is increasingly used by movements against corporate enclosure and for ecological alternatives to industrial capitalism. See Starr 2000; IFG 2002; Brecher et al. 2000; Peet & Watts 1996; Esteva & Prakash 1998:152-191; Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999:141-164; Klein, 2001:82. These practical usages are a neglected dimension in the mainstream commons literature, which tends to rely on the epistemic authority of academic 'experts' to collect social data – whether that is data on the global commons, or the local commons of specific development sites – and neglect ongoing processes of commons contestation and definition (Goldman 1998:9, 47).

While there is ample evidence of the existence of an alternative commons paradigm, the tendency to idealize and romanticize community life needs to be continually checked, particularly by Northern academics looking to the South for moral redemption (Tuan 1989:168). We should be particularly wary of equating empirical "communities", with the broader notion of commons. This serves to romanticize life in a mythic universal community, and downplays the conservative potential of isolated, parochial ways of life. While the commons might represent a normative potential inherent in community life, the empirical reality of moral codes within living breathing communities can look quite different, and can easily include an exclusion of basic life goods to members who are older, not able-bodied, or excluded for other reasons. As Yi-Fu Tuan cautions, the grace of non-Western communities is often exaggerated to alleviate Western guilt about the uncertain moral codes of capitalist modernity (1989:168).

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[26] For a fascinating photographic defence of the local 'ethnosphere', see Wade Davis,

Empirical reality of commons struggles decidedly informs normative ideals, but does not match it in an ontologically simplistic fashion. Although "most forms of social thought have sought to establish a closure between factual and normative propositions" (Giddens 1992:134), the 'is' and the 'ought' are dialectically connected, but not identical. Santos writes, "the [commons] is not an unqualified human good. Rather, it is qualifiable according to the depth and breadth of the emancipatory knowledge that it manages to put to work, that is to say, according to the extent that it eliminates colonialism and builds up solidarity" (1995, 38). As living breathing entities, commons exist in a dialectical relationship, and are characterized by an "*endless* trajectory from colonialism to solidarity guided by and constitutive of emancipatory knowledge" (Santos 1995:37-38, emphasis mine).

It bears repeating that the commons is conceptualised as having a normative potential that is linked to social agency, but not reducible to either a norm, or an empirical phenomenon. The commons is an *ideal type* that draws upon social relationships and practices and norms, crystallizing their potential to counter the exhaustion of a relentless commodification drive. This potential is rooted in knowledge of unavoidable biospheric membership that may be more evident at the local level and with community regulation, but not necessarily so. McMurtry insists that we investigate not absolutes, but "degrees of life ranges of social or individual life hosts" (1999:211). This means that the commons paradigm exists

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Light at the end of the world: A journey through the realm of vanishing cultures (2002).

in degrees, rather than absolute terms. Looking for degrees of commons allows a better measure of 'progress' than is awarded by conventional economic measures. As McMurtry writes:

> ...vital life ranges can advance or regress in any life parameter . . It is in this quite precisely identifiable progression, or regression, toward or away from the realization of the civil commons that we find what might be called social development, or its opposite (1999:211).

Signs of commons struggles to maximize life and resist commodification (the money code) does not mean that an outcome of greater democracy and a challenge to anthropocentric modes of development is guaranteed. A break with an historic bloc cannot simply occur with a shift of ideas, since ideas exist in a dialectical relationship with material and institutional structures (Gramsci [1997]: 366; Scott 1985:322). An idealized interpretation of social change is what Susan George refers to as the "forehead slapping school", which believes that "once individuals and institutions have...actually understood the situation, they will smack their brows and, in a flash of revelation, instantly redirect their behaviour 180 degrees" (1998:xic). Dryzek similarly criticizes "green romantics" for over-prioritising individual attitudes and ideas, at the expense of public-policy analysis of alternative economic systems and transitions:

> ...even if there were large-scale conversions of individuals along the lines sought by green romantics, it is quite possible that nothing at all would change at the macro level. If there is no structural setting which facilitates

> the articulation of frustration with the old order, the construction of solidarity against that order, and action based on that solidarity, then the old order will survive (1997:170).

While counter-hegemonic ideas are necessary, they are not a sufficient condition for social change, which occurs as much from the transforming power of capitalist enclosure (Scott 1985:346). Because the commons paradigm inevitably exists as a dialectical counterpart to a paradigm of commodification and control, and shares common elements with capitalism's own socialization dynamic, these ideas themselves are in danger of being subverted, and transformed to the aspirations of capitalist systems – namely the maximization of profit through the money sequence.

While we must remain wary of idealist utopias, the flip-side of the coin would be to deny the power of ideas and subjective perceptions on social change. As Kwame Appiah writes, "we cannot change the world simply by evidence and reasoning, yet we surely cannot change it without them either" (1995:111). Santos eloquently echoes this sentiment: "the social invention of a new emancipatory knowledge is, to my mind one of the pre-conditions to break with capitalist self-reproduction. Such an invention, I argue, is a long social process that is already under way" (1995:54-55). In short, the commons retains a potential that is worth defending as an organizing and adjudicating principle to evaluate social responses to eco-social crises. The commons also counters the omnipotence/impotence tendency by existing in a dialectical relationship with a seemingly unassailable paradigm of global capitalist Leviathan.

IV. Making linkages: exhaustion, inequality and scale

> The "Global Project" is attempting to further dissolve and destroy what still remains of those democratic commons.
> -Estava & Prakash (1998:153).

☙ The crisis of ecological exhaustion has generated a crisis in existing models of capital accumulation. In response, corporate elites endorse sustainable development as a means of offsetting the private risks of crisis, re-establishing certainty in the accumulation process, and creating "a new truth of growth *and* sustainability" that constitutes the "dominant paradigm in the politics of the environment" (Lash et al. 1996:19). This model is articulated through the dialectical pairing of commodification (enclosing the commons into private property segments) and socialisation (attempting to offset ecological risks through centralized information and management). A key agent enacting this model is the middle grouping of the cadre class that takes on the speaking position of global resource managers, managing access to resources in the name of the ostensibly universal, cosmopolitan goal of sustainable development. Individualism and consumerism are key ideological tools in this paradigm, with sustainability interpreted in terms of sustaining growth levels through market mechanisms and top-down technological fixes. The outcome in terms of social stratification is heightened environmental dumping and social inequality.

Against the hegemonic bloc of sustainable development, an emerging counter-hegemonic response congregates around a conceptualisation of the commons – one that is far from unified, but identifies a number of similar themes in an emerging paradigm. These themes include a challenge to commodification and top-down socialization processes, a valuation of local knowledge, and a multi-scaled approach to solidarity. Social regulation is achieved via participatory structures expressing community values of social solidarity, rather than the possessive individualism of market-regulated systems. Key agents of the commons perspective include a wide variety of social actors that are grounded in localities, attempt to regain control over use values, but wary of sustainability that is achieved at the expense of the Other. Whereas sustainable development staves off exhaustion in the name of growth, the worldview articulated within the commons paradigm addresses the crisis at its core – the survival of human and non-human species in a complex, and chaotic planetary ecology. The struggle between these two perspectives and their respective blocs is of central significance in the battle to overcome planetary exhaustion, and is indicative of paradigmatic tension. These differences are summarized in the table below:

	Sustainable Development	*Commons*
Goal	Capital Accumulation, Sustainable Profits	The Maximization Of Life
Scale	Global is favoured; bigger is better	Multi-scaled; favour a level where meaningful participation can occur
Process	Top-Down; Expert Knowledge	Democratic; Local Knowledge(s)
Human/nature metabolism	Anthropocentric / Environmental	Ecocentric / Ecological
Social regulation	Market	Community
Social agency	Sustainable development historic bloc / cadre class	Movements to control use value at multiple scales, preserve local knowledge(s), and create non-market modes of provisioning

As mentioned above, the commons paradigm as an ideal type is found in matters of degree in the 'real world' of social struggle. The concept of the commons claims particular authority over that of sustainable development when it addresses the crises of the biosphere, not just the crises of capitalism. Its presence as an alternative is most visible when it challenges the anthropocentric assumptions that underpin conventional development models, the destructive consumption patterns of the minority world, and moves towards concepts of social, economic, and political life that are ecocentric, reflecting the inevitable reliance of human systems on the biospheric life host.

We have maintained that these paradigmatic themes are found in varying degrees in diverse communities, movements, and locales. There is no one revolutionary subject. The theory and the practice of the commons paradigm suggests the importance of working across different boundaries, as communities establish reciprocal links of solidarity with one another. At the same time we acknowledge the heterogeneity of social agency, liberation theology suggests that we can observe particularly powerful lessons about solidarity and communal protection from poor communities excluded by the dominant market system. The work of Brazilian liberation theologian, Leonard Boff, connects liberation theology's focus on the poor, with the ecological imperative to preserve the earth. According to this tradition, by taking "the standpoint of the poor, we realize to what extent current societies are exclusionary, to what extent democracies are imperfect, to what extent religions and churches are tied to the interests of the powerful" (1997, 107). Yet at the same time Boff also insists "the very same logic of the prevailing system of accumulation and social organization that leads to the exploitation of workers also leads to the pillaging of whole nations and ultimately to the plundering of nature" (1997, 111). While the poor, and the "most threatened beings in creation" remain an essential starting point for the creation of solidarity, the challenge for liberation becomes a much greater quest for a new paradigm of social existence. In Boff's words:

> It not longer suffices merely to adjust technologies or to reform society while keeping the same basic logic, although such things should always be done; the most important thing is to overcome such logic and the sense of being that human beings have held for at least the last three centuries. It will not be possible to deal with nature as our societies have tried to do, as though it were a supermarket or a self-service restaurant. It is our common

> wealth that is being mercilessly plundered, and that inheritance must safeguarded. . . It is not only the poor and oppressed who must be liberated but all human beings, rich and poor, because all are oppressed by a paradigm – abuse of the Earth, consumerism, denial of otherness, and of the inherent value of each being – that enslaves us all (1997, 111, 113).

While struggles against enclosure might be able to make links across localities, this does not mean they will always resist xenophobic tendencies, nor does it mean that they can avoid the question of scale. Struggles over the global atmospheric commons raise different sets of needs, constraints, and institutional structures than struggles over communal grazing land, or corporeal struggles involving pesticide contamination within a given community. This suggests the need to integrate analyses of inequality, alongside analysis of commons. While all planetary species might face the logic of exhaustion, this does not mean that 'we' are all in this together. Eichler argues that inequity of ecological degradation can be seen as a type of stratification, where the "powerful can impose indivisible costs on the many [e.g. global warming] for divisible benefits for the few [e.g. car ownership, or high fossil fuel consumption]" (1999:192).

As mentioned above, the commons literature is badly in need of reflexivity about the power of Northern actors to constitute power/knowledge relationships (Goldman 1998:9). Lest we forget, it is precisely these extreme power differentials, casual and coercive relationships with local landscapes, and an ability to operate on a global scale that provide transnational corporations a powerful advantage – an advantage which affords the ability to pillage the resources of impoverished Indian rice farmers, or Indigenous corn producers in Chiapas, or black communities in urban USA. In the words of an Asian NGO coalition:

> The greater one's relative economic power and the more seamless the global economy, the greater the freedom enjoyed by the powerful to exercise claims over the non-monetary resources of the poor wherever it may be profitable to do so. Released from the constraints of place and obligations to community, those who control accumulated financial credits seek out ecological stocks wherever environmental frontiers remain (1994:67).

While the mobility of transnational corporations is well documented by globalisation scholars, issues of cosmopolitanism, scale and epistemic reflexivity are less often applied to the forces of 'good': development workers, anthropologists, global resource managers, and others acting in solidarity with those on the sharp end of the neo-liberal stick.

Chapter 5

DEMOCRACY

The next two chapters explore issues of solidarity and scale in the case of Zapatismo, examining the problematic nature of assuming homogeneity, mutual understanding and an unproblematic solidarity across rigid divides of race, class, and gender stratification. The Zapatista movement is not an empty vessel for distant solidarity efforts, but contributes its own unique counter-hegemonic vision of a democratically managed commons. This vision posits a radical economic and political democracy against a highly inequitable, and exploitative capitalist processes that threaten the survival of indigenous communities in Southern Mexico and limit possibilities for democratic governance globally. As Noami Klein writes in a survey article entitled, "Reclaiming the commons", "[I]t's the same issue everywhere: trading away democracy in exchange for foreign capital" (2001, 88).

This chapter specifically explores the possibilities of a paradigm shift away from the minimalist democratic procedures ("low-intensity democracy"), towards a new common sense based on an political ideal of participation. As Santos writes, this transition requires a move outside the liberal realm where the political is narrowly restricted to formal citizenship, and towards a politicization of the other realms of human existence: the homeplace, the marketplace, and the worldplace (1995, 50). An examination of this shift in the Zapatista Army of National Liberation demonstrates a deliberate attempt to expand the meaning of democracy beyond the realm of the ballot box, towards a notion of socio-economic democracy.

With the enclosure of capitalist production, Scott argues that there is a possibility for legitimacy crises to emeerge when subordinate groups employ the moral authority of exclusion to publicize their lack of participation in the hegemonic order (2000). This argument neatly aligns with the Zapatista case: as the global economy encroached into an already precarcious realm of subsistence existence, their voices were heard throughout the world as they articulated resistance to a paradigm of commodification and control *threatening their very survival. While the Zapatista resistance is emblematic of a paradigmatic transition away from minimalist democracy and towards particpatory ideals, it is also paradoxical. In the context of the violence of neo-liberal globalism, a range of military tactics were used as tools to lobby for greater democracy. The point is not to morally condemn, or applaud this strategic choice, but to suggest that it is a strategy born out of a neo-liberal climate of inequality, exploitation, and exhaustion. This chapter originally appeared in Theory and Society (Johnston 2000).*

A new democratic paradigm: from white-washed minimalism to pedagogical guerrillas and revolutionary counterpublics

> You must struggle. Struggle without rest. Struggle and defeat the government. Struggle and defeat the government. **Struggle and defeat us.** If the peaceful transition to democracy, dignity, and justice wins, never will there have been a defeat so sweet.
>
> -Subcomandante Marcos, in the opening speech to the National Democratic Convention, August 1994 [1]

☙ The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) have consistently defied popular expectations of guerrilla struggle. On January 1st, 1994, EZLN soldiers used armed means to temporarily capture Chiapas' major urban centers. Since that initial uprising, the EZLN has not launched any military offensives, and has instead struggled to mobilize civil society. Defying expectations of rigidity and violence, the Zapatistas embraced pluralism, eschewed Marxist rhetoric, maintained a relatively horizontal organizational structure, and even introduced a revolutionary law on women. They demanded democracy, yet steadfastly refused to turn in their arms.[2] At the same time, the EZLN have not acquired any new weapons since the cease-fire, but have instead used their resources to alleviate poverty in the indigenous communities. They write:

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[1] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Shadows of Tender Fury. The Letters and Communiqués of Subcomandante Marcos and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation*, trans. Frank Bardacke, Leslie López, and the Watsonville, California, Human Rights Committee, introduction by John Ross, afterword by Frank Bardacke (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1995), 250.

> . . . the vast majority of the Zapatistas' weapons are sticks made from different varieties of jungle trees. They include mahogany, cedar, hormiguillo, canté, bayalté, huapác, yellow branch, and other woods".[3]

The paradox of armed rebels fighting for democracy was exemplified at the National Democratic Convention (CND) which the Zapatistas hosted in August of 1994 in the heart of the Lacandón rainforest. Over 6,000 Mexicans and international observers attended. The paradox of an armed guerrilla group holding a conference to discuss democracy did not go unnoticed by the Zapatista leadership itself. In his speech addressing the delegates, Marcos spoke of the "absurdity of a civilian movement in dialogue with an armed one", while the convention itself represented a "peaceful effort by armed people".[4] Even though the Zapatistas themselves had risen up in arms, groups that supported an armed overthrow of the government, or demanded voter abstention in the upcoming presidential elections, were banned from the Convention. The EZLN refused to play a role in the collective leadership of the CND, Marcos stating that "this is a convention that is looking for a peaceful road to change and should not be led by armed people".[5] This paradox took on a poetic visibility during the opening ceremony of the CND, when Zapatista soldiers marched with white ribbons wrapped around the end of their weapons. Marcos explained:

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[2] Making statements about the Zapatistas in the plural, can give rise to suspicious that one is unjustifiably extrapolating the words of Subcomandante Marcos. Yet most observers of the Zapatista movement are, of necessity, intellectually indebted in some way to the prolific and eloquent articulations of Marcos. My analysis draws from his writings, but I have sought to corroborate conclusions from other sources, such as first-hand accounts and independent electronic news sources. This is an admittedly imperfect method of data collection. Although it clearly does not satisfy positivist criteria for producing "truth", it is possible to conduct a hermeneutical exploration of key themes emerging out of the conflict. Regardless of Marcos' origins (middle-class, intellectual, *mestizo,* Marxist, etc...), and his obvious inability to represent all indigenous peoples and *campesinos* in Mexico, it is clear that the Zapatista constituencies have allowed him to stand forward as a public representative of their struggle. In short, this analysis is conducted with a cautious recognition that there may be discrepancies between what Marcos writes, and what the Zapatistas actually do.

[3] EZLN, "Communique of the Clandestine Indigenous Revolutionary Committee-General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation – December 29, 1997", (1998), Online. Internet. http;//www.peak/org/~joshua/fzln/ezln971229.html. Accessed January 12 1998.

> Those ribbons signify the purpose of our weapons; they are not arms to be used in confrontation with civil society. Those ribbons on the guns represent, like everything else here, a paradox: *weapons that aspire to uselessness* (emphasis mine).[6]

The paradoxical nature of the Zapatista uprising befuddled academic observers, and prompted a somewhat predictable reaction of high-minded nomenclature. On numerous occasions, the Zapatista rebels were referred to as "postmodern".[7] The politically ambiguous postmodern terminology belied the politically directive nature of their struggle, and provided little understanding of the empirical obstacles to democratisation, or the precise nature of the Zapatistas' democratic aspirations. At the same time, it is not clear that the Zapatistas can be accurately described as "modern", even though they demand the services of a modern welfare state, and employ modern political discourses like nationalism, socialism, and feminism. Not only is the modern label ambiguous, but it disguises the extent to which the EZLN is rebelling against a particular model of modernization that has been responsible for the marginalization of small-scale rural producers in Mexico.

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[4] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Shadows of Tender Fury,* 242.

[5] Ibid., 247.

[6] Ibid., 242.

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[7] Who has employed this nomenclature? Bardacke notes that Marcos is frequently called "postmodern" both in the United States and in Mexico, as in "Dear Sup, Much Obliged: An Afterword by Frank Bardacke". *Shadows of Tender Fury*, 265. Within Mexico, author and intellectual Carlos Fuentes used postmodern terminology to make the point that the Zapatistas were the first movement of the 21th century to rebel without intending to seize state power; quoted in Patrick Cuninghame and Carolina Ballesteros Coronoa, "A Rainbow at Midnight: Zapatistas and Autonomy", *Capital and Class* 66, Autumn (1998): 12. In North America, it is difficult to find left-leaning intellectual analysis of the Zapatistas that did *not* use the postmodern label. Roger Burbach wrote an article in the *New Left Review* entitled, "Roots of the Postmodern Rebellion in Chiapas", May-June (1994): 113-124. Journalist Ana Carrigan, writing in the *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, wrote a similarly titled article: "Chiapas: the First Post-Modern Revolution" (1995). A March 18th article in *New Statesman and Society* also referred to the uprising as postmodern (1994): 20-21. June Nash referred to the Zapatistas as "this first postmodern movement in the Third World" in *Latin American Research Review 30,* no. 3 (1995):36. The Canadian documentary on the Zapatistas, *A Place Called Chiapas* (1998) written and directed by Nettie Wild, gave substantial attention to the postmodern label. For other examples of this nomenclature see also Louisa Blair, "Home from the Netwar. How the Internet revolutionised the Zapatista revolution", *Canadian Forum 78,* no. 875, April (1999):16; Sebastiao Salgada and Tim Golden, "Chiapas", *Rolling Stone 793,* August (1998):51; Tom Barry, *Zapata's Revenge: Free Trade and the*

A better analytical starting place is not abstract Western theoretical debates about modernity and postmodernity, but the actual substantive demands put forward by the Zapatista rebels. Democracy is one such demand, and will comprise the focus of this paper. Although a democratic struggle may not be as flashy as a "postmodern war", focussing on democracy affords a more accurate empirical description and normative reference point, and ultimately offers more insight into the paradoxes presented by armed democrats.

The Zapatistas' demand for democracy is hardly straightforward. The concept of democracy historically represents a highly contested terrain, particularly in an era where most Latin American countries are thought to have "transited" away from authoritarianism towards democratic governance. My objective here is not to write the last word on Latin American democratic transitions, or on the democratic aspirations of the peasantry as a universal category. Instead, I use the historical specificities of the Zapatista case to provide insight into the paradoxes of pro-democratic military action.

To explore what is both old and new in this particularly emblematic case of peasant resistance to economic marginalization and political exclusion, I address three issues: pedagogy, violence, and democracy. Examining the pedagogical intent of the Zapatista struggle suggests that words have served as their most important weapon. Even so, I reject the assertion that the Zapatistas are merely a

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Farm Crisis in Mexico (Boston: South End Press, 1995), 156.

social movement, not to be confused with a 'real' guerrilla army. In the second section of the paper I argue that the Zapatistas' uprising demonstrates how the lines between democracy and violence are blurred in the context of globalisation, and the related phenomenon of low-intensity warfare and low-intensity democracy. In the final section of the paper, I suggest that the Zapatista struggle provides valuable lessons about the contested terrain of democracy, and in particular, draws out the importance of the public sphere to democratic struggles in the paradigmatic transition.

I. Armed Pedagogy

> When you read Thich Quang Duc's letters [Vietnamese monk who publicly committed suicide by burning himself in 1963], you know very clearly that *he was not motivated by the wish to oppose or destroy but by the desire to communicate. When you are caught in a war in which the great powers have huge weapons and complete control of the mass media, you have to do something extraordinary to make yourself heard.* Without access to radio, television, or the press, you have to create new ways to help the world understand the situation you are in. Self-immolation can be such a means. If you do it out of love, you act very much as Jesus did on the cross and as Gandhi did in India. . . . These great men knew that it is the truth that sets us free, and they did everything they could to make the truth known.
>
> -Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese monk, poet and Zen Master[8]

> Fighting at birth, fighting while growing up, loving and dying fighting, and, yes, even writing is combat.

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[8] Thich Nhat Hanh, *Living Buddha, Living Christ* (New York: Riverhead Books), 82.

-Subcomandante Marcos[9]

☙ To understand the paradox of armed democrats, it is first necessary to explicate the pedagogical motivations behind the Zapatista's uprising. Although the Zapatistas engaged in very real military manoeuvres, complete with real guns, ammunition, and human blood, they were more motivated by the desire to communicate the truth of their suffering, than by a program to obliterate their enemy. On numerous occasions the Zapatistas explained that their goal was not to overthrow the ruling PRI[10] and become the new omnipotent force of Mexican politics, but to educate and raise consciousness using one of the only tools available to them — armed uprising. When questioned by a reporter from the *New Yorker* about their "delusional" aspirations to capture Mexico City Marcos responded, "Weren't we there already by January 2nd? We were everywhere, on the lips of everyone – in the subway, on the radio. And our flag was in the

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[9] Subcomandante Marcos, "Duality and Remembrance", Newsgroup: chiapas-n@burn.ucsd.edu. Posted September 24 1999. Accessed November 2, 1999. Previous chiapas-newsgroup messages are available from http://www.eco.utexas.edu/faculty/Cleaver/chiapas95.html gopher://mundo.eco.utexas.edu:70/11/mailing/chiapas95.archive. or at http://burn.ucsd.edu/archives/chiapas-l. The electronic Zapatista news sources, particularly the Chiapas95 newsgroup, served as the primary source of data for this article, particularly for recent events. While there are certainly problems with verifying the information available on the Internet, in general, it has proved a more reliable and comprehensive source than the information available through mainstream news sources. The reputability of the Chiapas95 news source can in part, be verified by the active role of Professor Harry Cleaver, University of Texas, Austin. An overview of his research interest and credentials as a Zapatista scholar can be found at http://www.eco.utexas.edu/Homepages/Faculty/Cleaver. His overview of the many Zapatista web sites and news groups now available can be found at http://www.eco.utexas.edu/faculty/Cleaver/zapsincyber.html.

[10] The PRI, or *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutionalized Revolutionary Party) has been in power continuously since 1929, and is is the

Zócalo".[11] An early communiqué describes the "primary objective" of the uprising as a way to inform:

> . . . the Mexican people and the rest of the world about the miserable conditions in which millions of Mexicans, especially us, the indigenous people, live and die . . .with these actions we also let the world know of our decision to fight for our most elementary rights in the only way that the governmental authorities have left us: armed struggle.[12]

Marcos describes their pedagogical military strategy even more explicitly in these words:

> [Intellectuals] are right when they say that things exist only when they are named. Until someone names it, Chiapaneco death doesn't exist. But now it exists . . . [the Zapatistas] named it by dying [in a military struggle], because no matter what, we were dying. It wasn't until you turned around to see, the press that is, that you named it . . . We didn't go to war on January 1 to kill or to be killed. *We went to war to make ourselves heard* (emphasis mine).[13]

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longest running political party in the world.

[11] Quoted in Chris Hables Gray, *Postmodern War* (New York: Guilford Press, 1997), 6.

[12] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Shadows of Tender Fury*, 55.

[13] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Zapatistas! Documents of the New Mexican Revolution* [book on-line.] (Autonomedia, 1995, accessed May 1997); available from gopher://lanic.utexas.edu/11/la/Mexico/Zapatistas, ch. 5.

Other Zapatista tactics, such as the September 1997 march from Chiapas to Mexico City, the prolific writings of Subcomandante Marcos, or the March 1999 *Consulta* were all explicitly designed to educate Mexicans and the world about the ongoing struggles for survival in the Chiapan countryside.[14]

If the Zapatistas were pursuing the traditional goal of guerrilla movements — conquering the state — we would surely have reason to be pessimistic about the impact of these pedagogical strategies. Even the most eloquent poetry is not capable of defeating a federal armed equipped with the latest military technology. The Zapatistas remain isolated in their jungle enclave, surrounded by one-third of the Mexican army and myriad paramilitary organisations. Viewing the pedagogical intent as primary, however, gives a much different perspective on the uprisings' accomplishments. In Marcos' words:

> . . . we weren't expecting the Mexican people to say: 'Oh, look, the Zapatistas have taken up arms, let's join in', and that then they would grab kitchen knives and go after the first policeman they found. We believed that the people would respond as they did, that they would say, 'Something is wrong in this country, something has to change'.[15]

The question then arises: how do we best conceptualize such a guerilla movement, without dismissing its military component, or minimizing its pedagogical intent? Antonio Gramsci – a Marxist theorist who considered the importance of politics and force – can help us in this task. His conceptualization of a *war of position* is a useful tool for understanding an armed struggle that targets ideas through armed strategies.[16] In his prison writings Gramsci contemplated the nature of revolutionary change, and saw a historical shift in strategy occurring from the "war of movement" to the "war of position". In a war of movement, a ruling group seizes control of the state, as in the Bolshevik or Cuban Revolution. Gramsci suggested that a war of movement was less feasible in the democracies of Western Europe, and saw possibilities opening up through a war of position which targets ideas, attitudes, the state and civil society. In a war of position, counter-hegemonic organisations merge together to form a new historic bloc and build up the social foundations of a new state. The goal is to build a broad counterhegemony, while resisting co-optation by more powerful hegemonic forces. This is an admittedly slow and onerous task, requiring effective political organisation capable of organising new groups of working classes, and building bridges between peasants and urban marginals.

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[14] Joshua Paulson, "The Zapatista March and the FZLN Congress", (1997), Online, Internet, http:/www.peak.org/~joshua/fzln/news970920a.html; Laurence Iliff, "DMN/Mexican referndum a success, rebels say", (1999), Newsgroup: chiapas-l@burn.ucsd.edu, Posted March 24 1999, Accessed March 25 1999.

[15] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Zapatistas!* ch. 5.

It is obvious that the Zapatistas cannot by themselves form a historic bloc that provides comprehensive counterhegemonic organisation on the level of ideas, institutions, and resources. It also seems clear that in a strict sense, the Zapatistas cannot serve as exemplars for peaceful protest. Participants in the January 1st uprising made international headlines only because they chose guns over unarmed protest. Even so, the Zapatistas' armed struggle was fought on the level of a Gramscian war of position. The rebels did not aim to take over the centres of government, but instead sought to capture the hearts and minds of Mexican civil society in order to rearrange power relations at a more profound level. The Zapatistas hoped to use military means to catalyse the formation of a new historic bloc, comprised of new democratic ideas, institutions, and equitable material strategies. Their struggle was based on the premise that a real "revolution" could not occur through a change in the reigns of power, but must involve long-term change at the level of individual consciousness, state institutions, material structures, and civil society.

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[16] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks,* trans. and ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971). 88, 229-232, 238-9.

The success of this strategy is an open question, introducing questions of institutional alternatives and political alliances in Mexico that exceed the constraints of this analysis.[17] What I hope to explore here are the motivations underlying this strategy. Why did an armed group wage a war of position? Or to put the question a slightly different way, why did a pro-democratic organisation feel that a military strategy was the only means to enter into dialogue with the national public sphere?

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[17] An effective counter-hegemonic bloc requires financial resources, knowledge and information, as well as the institutional and material capacity necessary to organise redistribution and bridge gaps between disparate elements of civil society. Although the Zapatistas have catalysed debate amongst more organised forces of Mexican civil society, an under-funded peasant army cannot fulfil all of the institutional and material functions of an effective counterhegemonic challenge. An old-fashioned political party, capable of seizing state power through democratic elections, and willing to concede autonomy to civil society organisations, still seems like an appropriate mechanism to accomplish many material and institutional tasks of the counterhegmonic historic bloc. At the present time, however, this possibility is limited in Mexico, both by the inconsistencies in the electoral process, and the well-documented problems of the centre-left opposition PRD party. See Philip Russell, *Mexico Under Salinas* (Austin, Texas: Mexico Resource Center, 1994), 107-123; Wayne A. Cornelius, *Mexican Politics in Transition. The Breakdown of a One-Party-Dominant*

Comparative analysis of social revolutions suggests that social revolutions have usually lead to stronger – more centralized, bureaucratic, and coercive – national states than the old regimes they replaced, thereby "belying the liberal or democratic hopes of many of their participants".[18] The Zapatista needed to look only to their own national history to see evidence of this. The Mexican revolution provides a graphic demonstration of the kind of solidified, corporatist regime that can evolve when the revolution is "institutionalized". The institutionalized agents of the Mexican revolution, such as the corporatist PRI-sponsored National Peasant Confederation (CNC) were designed as a substitute to autonomous

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Regime, Monograph Series, 41 (University of California, San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1996), 73, 116. Another potential obstacle to the possibility of an effective counterhegemony is the tension between the 'old' left, and the EZLN, as well as the marginalization of the formal working class in the activities of Mexican civil society. The PRI continues to command loyalty from many members of the state-sponsored labour unions. Labour was conspicuously and symbolically under-represented at the national democratic convention (CND) at Aguascalientes. Tensions between the Zapatistas and traditional 'left' groups lead to the formation of two rival civilian networks in 1996: the Zapatistas' civilian organisation (FZLN), and the FAC-MLN (Broad Front for the Construction of a National Liberation Movement). Another point of tension is the ties between the FAC-MLN and the EPR (Popular Revolutionary Army), a guerrilla movement operating in Guerro and Oaxaca that the EZLN has criticised for its dubious origins and aspirations to state power; Patrick Cuninghame and Caroline Ballesteros Corona, "A Rainbow at Midnight: Zapatistas and Autonomy", *Capital and Class 66*, Autumn (1998):12-23.

[18] Theda Skocpol, *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* (USA: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 20.

peasant organising. Repression, combined with the CNC's privileged access to state resources and the promise of land, kept autonomous organising at a minimum.[19] Besides the anti-democratic nature of corporatist control, the material gains of the revolution simply never arrived in regions like Chiapas. *Campesinos*[20] in this state experienced minimal land reform; small-scale agricultural self-sufficiency was not created, and local power structures dominated by landowners and cattle ranchers remained intact up until the present day. By the 1970s, independent *campesino* organisers in Chiapas found that the CNC was not only unable to help them, but was actively participating in their repression.[21]

The history of failed social revolution in Mexico partially explains the Zapatistas' decision to wage their war on the level of civil society. The Zapatistas' choice of armed pedagogy may also have been based on an understanding of the weak social basis underlying the Mexican state's implementation of a globalisation project – a topic to which I now turn.

II. Blurred boundaries: violence and democracy under a globalisation project

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[19] Tom Barry, *Zapata's Revenge: Free Trade and the Farm Crisis in Mexico* (Boston: South End Press, 1995), 23.

[20] *Campesino* is roughly translated as "peasant"; *campo* means land, while the *campesinado* refers to the peasantry.

[21] Dan La Botz, *Democracy in Mexico: Peasant Rebellion and Political Reform* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1995), 28.

> We want to say, in case anyone doubts it, that we do not regret rising up in arms against the federal government, and we say again that they left us no other way, and that we neither deny our armed path nor our covered faces; that we do not lament our dead, that we are proud of them and that we are ready to shed more blood and suffer more deaths if that is the price we must pay for democratic change in Mexico.
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> -Subcomandante Marcos, August 1994.[22]

❧ The Zapatistas are often portrayed as a social movement, distinct from a truly revolutionary guerilla struggle. This depiction is usually a laudatory one. Since the end of the Cold War, many left intellectuals declared that the age of armed uprising was over and gone.[23] Out went the Guevera model of the guerrilla *foco*, and in walked new social movements, usually posited as the new, non-violent weapons of social change. The military tradition was deemed a cold-war vestige, an artifact that the left should disown given the seemingly obvious incompatibility between armed struggle and democracy. Jorge Castañeda, among others, has insisted that the Zapatistas should not be characterised as an armed struggle, but should instead be conceptualised as a political movement.[24] Much of the analysis on the Zapatistas focuses on their peaceful use of armed tactics, especially the Internet aspect of their struggle. In a *Time* magazine report on "Cyberwar", the

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[22] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Shadows of Tender Fury*, 247.

[23] Jorge G. Castañeda, *The End of Utopia*; John L. Hammond, "A Farewell to Arms?", *Latin American Perspectives 22*, no. 4 (1995): 115-120.

[24] In Castañeda's later work, he insists that *The End of Utopia* was misinterpreted, and that he had not declared the age of armed uprising as over, but had instead argued that armed revolution was now unviable. See Jorge G. Castañeda, *The*

Zapatista uprising was given a typical spin – as a struggle that is primarily occurring over the Internet, characterised by a new "mode of battle that involves the Internet and other forms of telecommunication". An interview with American Zapatista activist, "Dominguez", (one of the organisers of the virtual "sit-ins" on Mexican government web sites) presented cyberwar as a more civilised alternative to blood-and-guts fighting. In Dominguez' words, "I'd much rather see extremists take down an Internet server than go around killing people".[25]

Clearly the Zapatistas should be differentiated from more violent methods of guerilla warfare. Although the EZLN believe armed uprising was necessary, they used violence cautiously in the initial military attacks, and since the cease-fire, have vigorously supported non-violent, educational tools of struggle to achieve their pedagogical objectives without bloodshed.[26] The EZLN have been

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Mexican Shock (New York: The New Press, 1995), 84.

[25] Tim McGirk, "Wired For Warfare. Rebels and dissenters are using the power of the Net to harass and attack their more powerful foes", *Time Special Report*: *The Communications Revolution. Languages of Technology. 154*, no. 15 (October 11, 1999), http://www.pathfinder.com/time/magazine/articles/0,3266,32558,00.html.

[26] Examples of the Zapatistas non-violent, pedagogical tactics abound. In December, 1994 a "nonviolent" EZLN military offensive in Chiapas was carried out with the help of the civilian population. Overnight, over half of Chiapas became "Zapatista territory"; no shots were fired, and 38 municipalities became controlled by the Zapatistas and their supporters. In September 1997 the Zapatistas organized a peaceful march to Mexico City. On March 21st, 1999, 5,000 Zapatistas went to municipalities across Mexico to create a national dialogue on the indigenous rights embodied in the San André Accords, to organize a vote on the initiative, as well as to give people practical experience with participatory democracy and pedagogical learning strategies. In the spirit of Paulo Freire, a detailed pre-consultation audio-tape was designed by the Zapatistas civilian offshoot (the FZLN) to encourage dialogical, pedagogical encounters on the important issues raised by the consultation.

extremely careful to abide by the cease-fire agreement signed by the federal government, deliberately refusing to respond when provoked by the Mexican military and paramilitary organisations. The Zapatistas have eschewed the traditional goals of obtaining state power. All of these symptoms lead Casatañeda to hypothesise that "any leftist movement in Latin America today is necessarily reformist — even if it is armed, indigenous, and encircled in that heart of darkness that is the Lacandón jungle."[27]

While it is important to acknowledge these particularities, insisting that the Zapatistas are socio-political actors, completely distinct from armed revolutionaries, obscures the context of violence and exclusion that forced them to consider armed struggle, and that stops them from turning in their weapons. Although the Zapatistas' democratic aspirations are central to their struggle, we must not forget that they orchestrated an armed uprising, complete with guns, bullets, military strategies, and loss of human life. What is significant about the Zapatista case is not their 'non-violent' nature, but how the uprising suggests that the lines between armed struggle and democracy cannot be neatly separated, no matter how much intellectual observers want social movements to be moving into a post-violence era.[28] Speaking at a round table entitled, "From the Underground

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[27] Ibid., 85-86.

[28] It is no a coincidence that pronouncements on the end of armed struggle tend to come from commentators who are not in the midst of violent persecution themselves. Claudia Von Werlhof argues that after long militaristic history full of wars, European and American observers tend to intellectually isolate wars and conflicts to the realm of state power, often accepted as legitimate. This way, intellectual observers in the West "behave as if the (so-called "legal") violence

Culture to the Culture of Resistance" on October 26, 1999, Marcos was insistent that he was not speaking as an expert on culture, but rather as part of a guerrilla movement. In his words:

> We are *guerreros* [guerrillas]. Some very otherly *guerreros*, but, at the end of the day, some *guerreros*. And we *guerreros* know a few things. And among the few things that we know, we know about weapons. So, better that I talk to you about weapons. Specifically, I'm going to talk to you about the weapon of resistance.[29]

Academic analyses often fail to appreciate both sides of the Zapatista struggle – their democratic aspirations, as well as their deliberate, self-conscious use of military tactics. Marcos has critiqued what he sees as a deliberate effort to not publicise the military aspect of the uprising, and stay with the consensus that armed uprising and democracy are fundamentally incompatible:

> It seems clear to me that there is consensus among the government, all of you [the press], and civil society that the world has to be shown that military alternatives are not a viable option. I don't know why. The January offensive demonstrated that it's possible to carry out sizable

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that the state/military uses would be justified and "necessary" on the one hand, and as if we, on the other hand, would have nothing to do with it. This way we fancy to be peaceful, because we have left violence to others". Claudia Von Werlhof, "Upheaval From the Depth. The "Zapatistas", the Indigenous Civilization, the Question of Matriarchy, and the West", *International Journal of Comparative Sociology XXXVIII*, no. 1-2 (1997): 122.

[29] Subcomandante Marcos, "Marcos on Underground Culture and Resistance", (1999), Listserve: chiapas-n@burn.uscsd.edu. Posted October 28, 1999, Accessed October 29 1999.

> military operations if a series of conditions are present, and that military knowledge need not be drawn from traditional guerrilla or Central American guerrilla tactics. Rather, it can be drawn from our country's own history. I don't think anyone wants to deal with that.[30]

Although it is important recognize the significance of the Zapatistas' choice to use armed strategies, romantic portrayals of armed struggles for democracy— even relatively self-conscious struggles like the Zapatistas' — should also be avoided. Neo-imperialist powers can also use the language of "democracy" to legitimize and justify their economic and military interventions. Even though the EZLN supported greater democracy in Mexico from the beginning of their armed struggle, choosing the paradox of a pro-democratic military strategy was risky. Recognizing these risks is important since they caution against a glamorization of a military approach to democracy, and remind us that using war to bring peace is a paradox in the true sense of the word: an absurdity that contains truth — a self-contradiction. As Marcos noted:

> There is a risk that the government might be able to politically isolate us on a national level, to present us as desperate extremists, intransigents, all those descriptions that are currently floating around. There is a risk that civil society might say: 'Yes, long live peace, death to the extremists', and leave us alone.[31]

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[30] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Zapatistas!* ch. 5.

[31] Ibid.

To understand the paradox of armed, pro-democratic movements, the Zapatistas' use of violence should be understood as part of a broader context of globalisation, and the related phenomenon of low-intensity democracy, and low-intensity warfare. Globalisation is a complex phenomenon, which I can only briefly explore in order to contextualize the violence of the Zapatista uprising.[32] Peasant rebellions have long been conceptualised as a response to the imperialism of capitalist economic systems.[33] It is important to unpack the precise nature of this economic exploitation using historical analysis, instead of assuming a monolithic, and (violently) abstract notion of globalisation, capitalism, or imperialism which has oppressed *campesinos* and indigenous peoples universally across space and time.[34]

Philip McMichael avoids attributing agency to an abstract concept of globalisation by mapping out the components of a historically-specific "globalisation project" which involves particular actors, economic objectives, and institutional changes. The globalisation project is conceived as "a set of institutional and ideological relations constructed by powerful social forces (e.g., managers of international agencies, states and firms, academic ideologues)", united by "the political project of restructuring to secure or stabilise market conditions for corporate expansion on a world scale".[35] Globalisation projects grew out of the debt crisis, and surpassed the universalistic aspirations of "developmental projects". The debt crisis not only restricted the financial capacities of national states, but allowed international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to emerge as gate-keepers ensuring the stability of global financial markets. These agencies engineered the policies of globalisation projects (also known as structural adjustment packages, or neoliberal policies), which were rigorously applied in virtually every nation on earth.[36]

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[32] A more in-depth analysis of globalisation and the Zapatista uprising is found in another paper, "Globalisation, democracy, and other development myths: Fighting a passive revolution in Chiapas, Mexico", *forthcoming*.

[33] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Eric Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

[34] By refusing to give agency to a conceptually abstract notion of globalization, and instead examining globalization as a historical phenomenon, we are able to avoid the "violence of abstraction" identified by historical-sociologists like Derek Sayer, and understand more precisely the empirical context of the uprising. Derek Sayer, *The Violence of Abstraction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

While developmental projects strove towards socio-economic betterment for the majority of the nation's citizenry, globalisation projects have turned the state's focus outwards, away from democratic accountability to national citizens. Although the state does not wither away, it becomes *transnationalized.* In other words, the state's commitment to ensuring the socio-economic needs of its own citizens is subverted to its responsibilities to global capital: maintaining the nation's competitive status within global markets and ensuring that debt payments are maintained through strict neo-liberal austerity measures are paramount objectives for the transnationalized state.[37] This is a particularly contradictory process in peripheral settings.[38] As resources become further concentrated in the hands of the few, and the goals of broad-based development recede into a utopian backdrop, the legitimacy of transnationalized peripheral states implementing neo-liberal policies falters. Previous structures of corporatism and clientalism, which used the state's resources to incorporate 'surplus' populations, are difficult to sustain with the fiscal austerity of neoliberal policies.[39]

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[35] Philip McMichael, "Globalization: myths and realities," *Rural Sociology 61*, no. 1 (1996): 25-55, 26, 41.

[36] Michel Chossudovsky, *The Globalization of Poverty. Impacts of IMF and World Bank Reforms*, (London: Zed Books Ltd; Penang, Malaysia: Third World Network, 1997).

The globalisation project presents the state with a thorny two-sided challenge. First, there is the well documented economic challenge: how to provide jobs, ensure growth, and so on. Second, there is the law and order challenge: how to

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[37] Different terms are frequently used to describe this phenomena. What McMichael and Myhre refer to as a "transnational-state", is similar to what Cox conceptualizes as the state becoming "internationalized". Gill uses the term the *new constitutionalism* to refer to the reorganization of a nation's legal and constitutional practices to define national economic goals in a more globalized fashion, thereby creating special rights for corporate citizens, at the same time undermining the state's accountability to citizens and the public sphere. Robert Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order. Social Forces in the Making of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 253; Philip McMichael and David Myhre, "Global Regulation vs. The Nation-State: Agro-Food Systems and the New Politics of Capital," *Review of Radical Political Economics 22,* no. 1 (1990):49-77. Stephen Gill, 1992, "The Emerging World Order and European Change: The Political Economy of European Union", *Socialist Register 1992,* eds. Ralph Miliband and Leo Panitch (London: The Merlin Press, 1992), 165.

[38] The term "peripheral" is used here to refer to social and economic marginalization in the global economic system. Although there is a geographical component to this marginalization, it is not used in a strictly geographic sense, since often core and periphery can be found together within a single nation-state, or even within a single-city.

[39] William Reno, "Markets, war, and the reconfiguration of political authority in Sierre Leone", *Canadian Journal of African Studies 29*, no. 2 (1995): 203-221.

'manage' the segments of society marginalised by this growth model. It has become exceedingly difficult for many peripheral states to balance international financial pressures from above, with the pressures made from below by marginalised citizens.[40] Lacking the resources to satisfy structurally irrelevant populations, the state resorts to a politics of exclusion and suppression. This need not take the form of an overt military dictatorship. In recent years, astute observers of democratic transitions have identified the phenomena of "low-intensity democracy", a system of governance which limits progressive reform, often co-exists with a program of tacit military dictatorship, is encouraged by American foreign policy, and which appears as the "political corollary of economic liberalisation".[41] A narrow form of procedural democracy limits democracy to a race between elite representatives, bolstering the state's legitimacy while it implements a program of severe economic restructuring that exacerbates social and economic inequality. Vilas writes:

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[40] Stephen Gill, "Globalization, Market Civilisation, and Disciplinary Neoliberalism", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 24, no. 3 (1995): 400; Ankie Hoogvelt, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World. The New Political Economy of Development* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 173.

[41] The term "low intensity democracy" is used in Barry Gills, Joel Rocamora, and Richard Wilson, *Low Intensity Democracy*, 9; W. Robinson describes similar phenomena, but uses the term "polyarchy" (as per Robert Dahl's 1971 work with that title) to describe "a distinct form of elite rule [that] performs the function of legitimating existing inequalities, but does so more effectively than authoritarianism". See William Robinson, "Globalisation, the world system, and "democracy promotion" in U.S. foreign policy", *Theory and Society 25* (1996), 626; William Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy. Globalisation, US Intervention and Hegemony* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Other useful analysis on the "low intensity" phenomenon: Carlos M. Vilas, "Latin America in the "New World Order": Prospects for Democracy", *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society 8*, no. 2 (1994): 257-282; Jan Knippers Black, "For Richer and Poorer. South America's Tenuous Social Truce", *Latin American Perspectives 87*, Vol. 22, no. 4 (1995): 81-87.

> The Latin American political systems call upon the citizenry to exercise democracy at the same time that the crisis and strategies of restructuring expel the majority from citizenship itself, at the essential level of social well-being.[42]

The globalization project's characteristic traits of a transnationalized state and low intensity democracy emerged in the 1980s in Mexico, which ultimately lead to a state policy of low intensity warfare in the 1990s when the state was unable to meet the law and order challenge. After the debt crisis in 1982, the national state became a model debtor, voluntarily implementing the harsh neo-liberal austerity measures demanded by its creditors. A historic commitment to the agricultural sector was abandoned, subsidies were removed, and support for the peasant sector withered. Large populations of small-scale producers were deemed "structurally irrelevant" to the goals of exporting and earning foreign currency prioritized by the globalization project. The implicit goal was to drive these "inefficient" farmers into the labor market, thereby suppressing rural wages and encouraging competitiveness in export crops. The decision of the Salinas government in 1992 to pave the way for NAFTA by amending Article 27 of the Mexican constitution — officially ending land reform, and opening the door to the privatization of *campesino* land — was the straw that broke the camels' back, and pushed the

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[42] Vilas, "Latin America in the "New World Order": Prospects for Democracy", 275.

Zapatista communities towards the 1994 declaration of war.

Globalization was not an abstract concept for *campesinos*, but a concrete socio-economic phenomenon that made *campesino* survival more precarious, frustrated efforts at political participation, undermined any semblance of democratic legitimacy, and ultimately shaped a context where poor farmers took up arms. With trade liberalization and constitutional amendments of the Salinas years, poorly paid farmers were forced to compete with cheap imports of American corn, while landless farmers saw their hopes of owning land officially dissipate. While the state retreated from its traditional corporatist responsibilities to the peasant sector, *campesinos'* political efforts to hold peaceful protests and influence state decision-making were consistently stymied. While claiming to open up the political process to greater democracy, elites refused to redistribute land, wealth or political power. Zapatista Major Ana María describes their frustrated efforts to obtain some measure of popular participation in government decisions:

> ...we could not find any other way out of this situation. We had spent years struggling peacefully, we held marches, we had meetings, we went to the municipal palaces and the Government Palace, and we went to Mexico [City] to the National Palace of Mexico to shout, to ask, to agitate in front of the government. They never paid attention to us. They always gave us papers full of promises. Then, what good is a piece of paper,

> filled with promises, to us?[43]

Liberation theology, a project of peaceful change also had its limits in bringing justice for the *campesinos* in a context of state indifference and even outright hostility. Marcos reports:

> What happened is that the Church-led projects failed, and the *compañeros* realized that even this strategy didn't offer them many options. If they organized into cooperatives, they get harassed, and the cooperatives are broken. If they organize themselves to ask for land, they are rejected. If they organize to take over the land, they are killed. They don't have good health; they're dying. That's the source of the "boom," the source of thousands of Zapatistas.[44]

By emphasizing the theme of death in their communiqués, the Zapatistas tried to communicate that their decision to wage an armed struggle grew out of the immiseration that ends life for many *campesinos* in Chiapas.[45] In addition to the violence of poverty and malnutrition, *campesinos* faced the deliberate violence of the cattle ranchers and armed guards that forcibly took control of cleared land. The evidence suggests that the EZLN did not originate in an idealistic plan to take over the federal state, but instead had more practical origins as a self-defense force protecting villages against hired thugs.[46] Their willingness to face death in warfare grew out of these early skirmishes with hunger, armed paramilitary organisations, and an unresponsive state. The Zapatistas were prepared for a long period of warfare, and were surprised by the rapid response of civil society demanding an end to incursions by the Mexican army. In an interview Marcos reported that in 1993 the army had organised a second-tier ("string") of military leaders because:

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[43] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Zapatistas!*, Ch. 8.

[44] Ibid., ch. 5.

[45] In the words of the Zapatistas, they were "dying again, but this time in order to live". In 1997 87% of indigenous school children, and 100% of indigenous women over the age of ten suffered from second degree malnutrition. Quoted in Patrick Cuninghame and Carolina Ballesteros Coronoa, "A Rainbow at Midnight: Zapatistas and Autonomy", *Capital and Class* 66, Autumn, (1998). EZLN, "EZLN Communique, 12th Anniversary November 17", (1995), Newsgroup: chiapas95@mundo.eco.utexas.edu, Posted November 21 1995, Accessed November 1 1999.

> . . . according to our organizational concept, the leaders must lead the troops in combat, in order to have moral authority. . . we thought that the first string of leaders would be killed in the first days of combat. We thought that all of us leading the troops would die — me, the other officers, and the members of the committees. . . So then what happened? We went out and we fought, and they didn't kill us. That's the great surprise, that they didn't kill us in the that first week of January (he laughs).[47]

The transnationalised Mexican state, combined with the heightened marginalization of the peasant sector, proved to be a highly volatile combination in Chiapas, ultimately leading to guerilla violence and a state policy of low-intensity warfare. Although violence was used by the revolutionary state throughout its history, corporatist traditions throughout most of Mexico tended to rely more heavily on the carrot than on the stick. With the debt crisis of 1982 onwards, the concomitant inability to sustain the corporatist projects, and the eventual appearance of armed conflicts in Chiapas and other states, the state has increasingly turned towards repressive tactics to deal with the increasingly troublesome law and order challenge of the globalization project. During the last decade the Mexican government doubled its military spending, while education and health budgets stagnated.[48] Across Mexico in recent years, an average of two PRD leaders or activists are killed each week.[49]

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[46] Subcomandante Marcos, "Interview: Subcomandante Marcos," interview with Media Benjamin, *First World, HA HA HA!. The Zapatista Challenge*, ed. Elaine Katzenberger (San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 1996), 65.

[47] Ibid.

While violence and death was part of daily life for impoverished indigenous people in Chiapas before 1994, a strategy of low-intensity warfare is now the unspoken state policy, a policy about which very little has been written.[50] This strategy is comprised of four primary elements: 1) strengthening the army, 2) attempting to legitimize the government, 3) and "taking the water away from the fish" (e.g., working to coerce and co-opt Zapatista supporters through means of assassinations, intelligence gathering, development projects for PRI supporters, psychological warfare, and bribery, and other means of violence carried out by paramilitary organizations), and 4) minimizing international solidarity with the Zapatistas.[51] The state has moved at least 70,000 troops into Chiapas (an estimated one third of the entire army) and received substantial amounts of U.S. military aid and advice to wage the war of counterinsurgency.[52]

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[48] Roberto González Amador, "Mexico increases its spending on the military", *La Jornada October 17th*, (1999), Online, Internet, http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/mexico/mil/jornada101799.html.

[49] James Petras, "Latin America: The Resurgence of the Left", *New Left Review 223* (May/June, 1997): 41.

[50] Ines Castro Apreza, "Psychological Warfare in an Urban Context. Threats, hostilities, and attacks received by civil organizations in Chiapas", (1999), Online, Internet, http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/mexico/mil/psychWarfare.html. For an excellent analysis of low intensity warfare, see Javier Sicilia, "Proceso: Low Intensity War Waged to Keep in Power", (1999), Online, Internet, http://burn.ucsd.edu/archives/chiapas-l/1999.11/msg00131.html. Sicilia argues that low intensity war is used to keep the PRI in power: "With the symptoms of

Since 1994, paramilitary groups have executed at least 1,500 indigenous opponents of the government in Chiapas.[53] The activities of paramilitary groups in the area, and their connections to the Mexican military, and US sources of

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violence exaggerated, fear imbued in the citizenry, the apparatus of control and repression rearticulated and generalised, what remains is the vote of fear. Doctor Zedillo arrived to power in this way, so why shouldn't the next come to power in the same way?"

[51] Ibid.

[52] Brian Wilson, "The Slippery Slope: U.S. Military Moves into Mexico." (1997), Online, Internet, Posted 17 June. 1997. Chiapas96-lite@mundo.eco.utexas.edu. Accessed 18 June 1997. Enlace Civil, A.C., "Presentation by Enclave Civil to the Encuentro between Civil Society and the EZLN, November 19, 1998." (1998), Newsgroup: chiapas-l@burn.ucsd.edu. Posted December 1 1998, Accessed December 2 1998. For an excellent overview of recent violence in Chiapas, and Mexico more generally, see global exchange's web site summary. Global Exchange, "Militarization", (1999), Online, Internet, http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/mexico/mil/.

[53] Diego Cevallos, "IPS/Army Tightens Noose around EZLN", (1999), Newsgroup: chiapas-l@burn.ucsd.edu, Posted August 21 1999, Accessed August 23 1999; Joshua Paulson, "The Massacre of Acteal, Chenalhó", (1998), Online, Internet, http://www.peak.org/~joshua/fzln/news971231.html. Accessed 1 February 1998.

military arsenal and expertise, have been well documented by various teams of investigative journalists..[54] This violence has created at least 20,000 internal refugees, mainly indigenous people forced from their municipalities in order to escape paramilitary attacks. Unemployed indigenous youths are offered lucrative bribes to participate in these paramilitary groups, and are trained on the myriad army bases in the area. These groups are used to terrorize *Zapatista* families and supporters, forcing them to flee from their communities and live in fear — as seen in the terror tactics of the December 1997 massacre in Acteal, Chenalhó when 45 indigenous persons, mainly women and children, were assassinated by paramilitary groups as they prayed for peace.[55] The brazen violence of these groups was demonstrated well before the Acteal massacre. In November 1997 the PRI-backed paramilitary group *Paz y Justicia* opened fired with automatic weapons on a caravan of church workers from the diocese of San Cristóbal which included celebrated indigenous-rights activist, Bishop Samuel Ruiz García. Aware that a strategy of repression has fallen out of favor in international circles (at least on a public-relations level), the Mexican government has attempted to deport all foreign human rights observers and journalists from the area. A report made at the November 1998 Encuentro between Civil Society and the EZLN described a situation that is consistent with reports coming out of the region at the time of this writing:

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[54] Joshua Paulson, "The Massacre of Acteal, Chenalhó." Online. Internet. http://www.peak.org/~joshua/fzln/news971231.html Accessed 1 February 1998.; Patrick Cuninghame and Caroline Ballesteros Corona, "A Rainbow at Midnight: Zapatistas and Autonomy", *Capital and Class 66*, Autumn (1998):12-23; Alfredo Jimenez, ""War supplies" stockpiled in Chiapas", (1999) Newsgroup: chiapas-i@eco.utexas.edu, Posted September 30 1999, Accessed November 2 1999; Richard Head, "RIGHTS: Mexican NGOs Denounce Abuses by Military", (1999) Newsgroup: chiapas-l@burn.ucsd.edu, Posted October 2 1999, Accessed November 2 1999; Ricardo Sandoval, "MH/ Zapatistas' conflict with army heightens in Chiapas, Sept 3", (1999), Newsgroup: chiapas-l@burn.ucsd.edu, Posted September 3 1999, Accessed September 4 1999.

[55] While the paramilitary groups were responsible for the actual killings, it is reported that the State Public Security police put a "defensive ring around the area to protect the paramilitaries", and that other key members of the PRI were involved, such as the ex-Secretary of Internal Affairs, Emilio Chauyffet Chemor. The majority of the victims of the Acteal massacre had entry wounds in the back. Jaime Aviles', "Zedillo: la guerra perdida", *La Jornad, January 10* (1999), Online, Internet, http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/mexico/mil/guerraPerdida.html.

> In Chiapas, there is not a state of law, but rather a state of latent war. Daily life is affected in all arenas by the military omnipresence and by the threat of incursions, detentions, assassinations and rapes. Freedom of movement does not exist in Chiapas: the military, police and paramilitary checkpoints prevent the *campesions* suspected of being Zapatistas from moving about the roads. Prostitution and drug addiction, nonexistent prior to 1994, are leading to the breakdown of indigenous communities close to the military camps. Illnesses previously unknown to the *campesinos*, such as AIDS, are spreading with the soldiers' presence. [56]

In late August of 1999, the army moved to tighten the noose around the neck of the Zapatista communities, attempting to build major roads into the Zapatista occupied territory under the guise of "social-development" projects. Protests followed, with participants including striking UNAM students and television personalities like television actress Ofelia Medina. State governor of Chiapas, Roberto Albores Guillen responded by stating that he would no longer allow the presence of national or international observers in the region.[57]

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[56] Enlace Civil, A.C., "Presentation by Enclave Civil to the Encuentro between Civil Society and the EZLN, November 19, 1998" (1998), Newsgroup: chiapas-l@burn.ucsd.edu. Posted December 1 1998, Accessed December 2 1998.

The unresponsiveness of governance at all levels to their concerns created the strong belief among a significant portion of the indigenous *campesino* population that there was no other option but to rise in arms to fight for democracy. For all the myopia of resource mobilization theorists, they have been right to emphasize the importance of local opportunity structures for understanding the formation of protest movements. A great deal of the paradox of armed struggle for democracy can be understood by an examination of the limited opportunity structure in the context of low-intensity democracy, and low-intensity warfare in Chiapas.[58] Today, the Zapatistas and their supporters continue to face limited options for peaceful protest, or implementing progressive reforms within the semi-authoritarian, low-intensity warfare in Chiapas.

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[57] This assertion has a very insecure legal basis. There is no basis for limiting travel to Mexican nationals, and the forced deportation of international observers has also been questioned in the courts. SIPAZ, Servicio Internacional para la Paz, "Sipaz Report November 1999", (1999), Newsgroup: chiapas-i@eco.utexas.edu, Posted October 28 1999, Accessed November 2 1999. La Jornada, "INM harassing Chiapas Tourists", (1999), Newsgroup; chiapas-l@burn.ucsd.edu, Posted September 2 1999, http://burn.ucsd.edu/archives/chiaps-l/1999.09/msg00002.html; "Emergency Human Rights Delegation to Chiapas, September 16-21, 1999", Online, Internet, http://www.advancenet.net/~church/chiapas/harassment.html/.

[58] Although my objective is to provide more nuanced understanding of the paradox of armed uprising in Chiapas, I make no claims to provide a comprehensive causal explanation of why the Zapatistas rebelled. Such a claim is not only far too vast for the constraints of this paper, but also exceeds my epistemological expectations of social scientific understanding.

Although an armed strategy was seen as the only way forward, the Zapatistas recognised the importance of having a well-considered theory of violence, again suggesting that the lines between violence and democracy are not as clear as many intellectual observers would like to believe. Looking at the violence perpetrated by socialist regimes throughout history, Parekh concludes that for a revolution to maintain legitimacy by promising to introduce a humane social order, it cannot rely on violence alone, and must have alternate strategies to armed struggle.[59] He writes, "a revolution requires violence: at the same time it is constantly tempted to misuse it, and runs the risk of losing its legitimacy and sense of direction. Every theory of revolution therefore needs a well-considered theory of violence".[60]

The EZLN fulfill Parekh's criteria of a "well-considered theory of violence" to an impressive degree. Although the ELZN felt that armed struggle was an appropriate path for them, they did not see violence as the singular key to unlock emancipation, and they do not hold the seizure of state power as the primary objective. In an interview Marcos explained:

> We don't understand armed struggle in the classic sense of the previous guerrillas. That is, we do not see armed struggle as a single path, as one single almighty truth around which everything else spins. Instead, from

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[59] Bikhu Parekh, "Marxism and the Problem of Violence". *Development and Change 23*, no. 3 (1992): 103-120.

[60] Ibid, 107.

> the start, we have seen armed struggle as one in a series of processes or forms of struggle that are themselves subject to change; sometimes one is more important and at times another is more important.[61]

By limiting violence, and targeting change at the level of civil society, the Zapatistas' armed pedagogy was a particularly effective strategy. The transnationalized Mexican state, which had been attempting to package NAFTA and neoliberal reform as a way of rebuilding a strong Mexico, faced a severe legitimacy crisis in the eyes of many Mexicans.[62] By keeping their military actions minimal, and developing a close relationship with Mexican civil society, the Zapatistas were also able to maintain the moral high-ground in their conflict with the state, and legitimise their overarching demand for greater democracy in Mexico.[63]

Violent, highly inegalitarian situations such as the one faced by *campesinos* in Chiapas, make it clear that the battle for democracy will not occur exclusively at the ballot box, or on parliamentary battlefields. Understanding the empirical context of violence and unaccountable governance has helped us make sense of the strategic considerations of armed democrats in Chiapas. To understand the normative component of the Zapatista struggle, we require a more thorough exploration of their struggle to deepen the meaning of democracy in Mexico beyond low-input governance.

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[61] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Zapatistas!*, ch. 5.

[62] Sarah Hilbert, "For Whom the Nation? Internationalization, Zapatismo, and The Struggle over Mexican Modernity", *Antipode 29*, no. 2 (1997): 115-148. Isidro Morales, "The Mexican Crisis and the Weakness of the NAFTA Consensus," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 550 (1997): 130-153.

[63] Opinion polls show that most Mexicans are averse to concepts of radical transformation. See Wayne A. Cornelius, *Mexican Politics in Transition. The Breakdown of a One-Party-Dominant Regime*, Monograph Series, 41 (University of California, San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1996), 90.

III. Rethinking democracy: the democratising effect of Zapatista counterpublics

> . . . they said nobody in their right mind would answer this call from a rebel group, outlaws . . . whose obsessive language is now trying to recover old, used-up words: democracy, freedom, justice. . .
>
> -Subcomandante Marcos,
>
> August 1994[64]

☙ As mentioned above, the Zapatistas' unconventional combination of pedagogy with armed violence has lead some to argue that they are not really guerrillas per se, but "armed reformists".[65] While the traditional guerrilla taxonomy may not apply, the Zapatistas have certainly not applied a 'reformist' label to their own struggles. Instead, they have articulated an ambitious vision of a radically re-shaped Mexican democracy – a democracy that operates on a local, national, and even a global level.[66] They have insisted that they are not just fighting for a bigger piece of the economic pie, or a shot at governance, or simply a clean-up in the electoral process. The vision of democracy advocated by the *Zapatistas* is not the minimalist Western conception of periodic voting, or what Marcos calls, "democracy white-washed with imported detergent and the water from anti-riot tanks".[67] They insist that they are fighting for something more difficult to achieve: a new world, comprised of more democratic institutions, ideals, systems of governance, and socio-economic outcomes. When asked to comment on the current political panorama in Mexico, Marcos clearly articulated what they were contesting was not the holder of power, but the inequitable nature of power itself in Mexico:

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[64] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Shadows of Tender Fury*, 243.

[65] Castañeda, *The Mexican Shock*, 86.

[66] In the Fifth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle they make the following appeal: "Today . . . we call on the People of Mexico and on the men and women of the entire planet to unite their steps and their efforts with us in this stage of the struggle for liberty, democracy, and justice . . EZLN, "V Declaration of the

> What we want is an alternative country and not an alternative in power. We are not struggling against the PRI. We are struggling against the system of the Party-State. . .[68]

Struggling for an "alternative country"? This vision of grandeur makes it tempting to dismiss the Zapatistas' democratic vision as a naïve remnant of more radical times. Their failure to engage in party politics had also lead to criticism that they are unconnected from the struggle over actually existing democracy in Mexico.[69]

Lacandon Jungle", (1998), Online, Internet, http://www.ezln.org/archive/quinta-lacandona-eng.html.

[67] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Shadows of Tender Fury*, 246.

[68] La Jornada, "Sub. Marcos Interview with UNAM Radio, La Jornada, 11-7-95", (1995), Newsgroup: Chiapas95@mundo.eco.utexas.edu, Posted November 8 1995, Accessed November 1 1999.

[69] Gustavo Esteva outlines this criticism in his article, "The Zapatistas and People's

Manuel Castells suggests that the Zapatistas have failed to translate their popular imagery into political clout, and that as long as they are unable to translate "the new Zapatista language into conventional leftist politics", their democratic vision will be of limited value.[70]

In light of their armed tactics, and unwillingness to become directly involved in electoral battles, how are we to understand their paradoxical claim to be democratic champions? In the following section I argue that the Zapatistas are in fact, democratic rebels, even though they don't run for office, or endorse political parties. To understand their democratic aspirations, we need a notion of democracy that is more substantive than the hegemonic version of low-intensity democracy, and which can account for the important role of the public sphere in the democratisation process.

The positivist tools of mainstream democratic thought – "minimalism" – don't provide us with satisfactory analysis of the Zapatista's democratic aspirations. Minimalist conceptions of democracy (also known as the school of competitive elitism, or polyarchy) are based on the works of Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl. These two theorists focused on democracy as a political procedure, and saw the ballot box as the exclusive channel for citizen participation in modern societies. Although few democratic theorists today would call themselves

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Power", *Capital & Class 68*, Summer (1999):153-183.

[70] Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture Volume II The Power of Identity* (Great Britain: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 82.

"Schumpeterians", the minimalist vision of democracy is the hegemonic paradigm in political science, and in international policy-making circles. Minimalist conceptions of democracy are divorced from issues of economic democracy or social equality, and elections are used as the primary litmus test to evaluate a country's democratic status. Minimalism tends to neglect the role of social movements in the struggle for deeper, more participatory democratic systems, and views democracy more as a system of elite governance, than an ethic of popular participation or equality.[71]

My contention is not that electoral obstacles to Mexican democracy do not exist, or that the procedures of liberal democracy are unimportant. My objection is that the standard minimalist approach to Mexico's politics portrays democracy in a flat, two-dimensional fashion, focussing exclusively on state control of electoral politics, and using a narrow criterion of democracy based on Western experience.[72] A photo of Mexico's semi-authoritarian state is taken, the variables are precisely measured against procedural criteria, the relative ranking is calculated, and the positivist theorist looks no further.[73]

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[71] David Apter, "Democracy and Emancipatory Movements: Notes for a Theory of Inversionary Discourse", *Development and Change 23* , no. 3 (1992): 141. Evidence of the persistent hegemony of the minimalist paradigm can be seen in the theoretical obsession in political science with "transitology" - the science of transitions to democracy. The seminal work by O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1986) focuses on elite actions, such as internal divisions and political pact-making, and how they make a transition to democracy possible. Although O'Donnell and Schmitter do not fear popular mobilization, as Schumpeter certainly did, they also do not assign it any great importance. Civil society's resurrection is considered a secondary factor in the transition to democracy, a force which pushes forward a movement initiated by elite actors, but which is ultimately ephemeral (Ibid, 331). They do not unequivocally endorse popular mobilization, however, cautioning that it could be dangerous for democratic consolidation and could even provoke a return to authoritarian rule. O'Donnell and Schmitter work within a narrow procedural definition of democracy where the primary goal is to sustain electoral rule, even if it has authoritarian tendencies, and does not lead to socio-economic reform or widespread political participation. Outcomes above and beyond the maintenance of electoral procedures are not a priority in this work, or in the highly influential school of minimalist democratic thought.

There are much richer traditions of democratic thought that we can draw from to understand the Zapatista struggle. Minimalist interpretations tend to obscure the dialectical nature of the struggle for democracy, and the role of pro-democratic forces in civil society. To understand armed democratic rebels, democracy needs to be understood outside the minimalist framework of electoral politics, in a more substantive sense that refers to the idea of returning power and self-determination back to people. In this expanded view, traceable back to the classic Greek definition as well as numerous Rousseauian-Marxist traditions, democracy is about more than just occasional voting. Democracy refers to a way of life where individuals and communities have relative autonomy, and are able to set the conditions for their own social, moral, ecological, and economic development. William Robinson summarises a vision of popular democracy that:

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[72] Although the question of democracy is often limited to the sphere of positivist political science in North America, it seems important to note the much broader importance of democracy for Latin American intellectuals. Beverley and Ovideo write that the theme of democratization has been a critical one for Latin American think tanks and networks who have faced the "problem of the long-term viability of democratic construction in Latin America, particularly in the face of the worst economic crisis it has experiences in this century". Democracy is not always approached in the tradition of North American positivism, but acts as a central theme in discussions of subjectivity, identity, and understanding of religious, cultural, and ethnic heterogeneity. Beverley and Ovideo write that "the theme of democratization has played the same role in the Latin American discussion as the shift in aesthetic-epistemological paradigms did in Anglo-European postmodernism". John Beverley, Michael Aronna, José Oviedo, eds., *The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 5-6.

[73] For an example of such an approach, see the influential work on democracy in Latin America by Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Democracy in Developing Countries. Volume Four: Latin America* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Pubishers, 1989).

> posits a dispersal throughout society of political power through the participation of broad majorities in decision making . . . Popular democracy is seen as an emancipatory project of both form and content that links the distinct spheres of the social totality, in which the construction of a democratic political order enjoys a theoretically internal relation to the construction of a democratic socioeconomic order, and democratic participation is a tool for changing unjust social and economic structures".[74]

To begin to capture the notion of popular democracy, the idea of democracy as a fixed, finite system of regular elections, universally applicable across time and space, should be soundly rejected as an imperialist fiction. A post-orientalist viewpoint conceptualises democracy as a three-dimensional matrix of pro and anti-democratic forces that struggle to deepen the meaning of democratic participation beyond proceduralism, and towards a more substantive vision of equal participation and autonomous self-determination. In this view, democracy is a moving target, a contested space where material and discursive struggles are fought, and where different groups compete for cultural, political and economic leadership in the public sphere.[75] Like the Gramscian struggle for hegemony, the struggle for democracy is never complete, and cannot be decided by force, or fiat. For the Zapatistas, this is "a struggle that does not aim to conquer 'democratic power' but to widen, strengthen and deepen the space where people can exert their own power."[76] The conditions for a democratic life are never completely resolved, but instead are continually negotiated and renegotiated by competing interest in the public sphere – a concept which is critical to understanding the possibilities for late-capitalist democracy. As Lummis poetically writes:

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[74] Robinson, "Globalisation, the world system, and 'democracy promotion" in U.S. foreign policy", 624.

> Radical democracy envisions the people gathered in the great public space, with neither the great paternal Leviathan nor the great maternal society standing over them, but only the empty sky–the people making the power of Leviathan their own again, free to speak, to choose, to act.[77]

A notion of public space, or the "public sphere", can help us reconceptualize the role the Zapatistas play in the struggle for a more substantive, participatory democracy in Mexico. This concept can help us better understand the Zapatistas' role as pedagogical rebels. They promote democracy not through party politics, but by interacting with the official public. This interaction broadens the conceptualisation of democracy in the public sphere beyond a narrow minimalist vision, and consolidates a stronger indigenous and *campesino* identity demanding the rights and conditions for self-determination.

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[75] This is not to say that the balance between these forces is an equal one. It is important to avoid the "fetishism of resistance" which is omnipresent in cultural studies, as well as in work on new social movements. Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture* (NY: Routledge, 1995), 39. In rural Mexico, anti-democratic forces within the state and civil society have had an overwhelming historical presence.

[76] Gustavo Esteva, "The Zapatistas and People's Power", *Capital & Class 68*, Summer (1999):154.

[77] C. Douglas Lummis, *Radical Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 27.

The Habermasian conception of the public sphere is a useful starting point, which Fraser clearly defines as,

> ...a theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, and hence an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction.[78]

As feminist theorists and post-colonial theorists have noted, a strict Habermasian conception of a singular "bourgeois" public sphere, where inequalities and status distinctions are bracketed and neutralised, is problematic.[79] The ideal of an inclusive bourgeois public sphere is tarnished by the historic exclusion of people lacking proper credentials for participation (women, blacks, property-less males). Even when formal barriers to participation were erased, participation in public debates was (and is) barred by inadequate resources, and unspoken cultural assumptions about proper participation styles (rational, 'objective', should address 'public' rather than 'private' matters, etc.). In addition, the ideal of a singular public sphere is cast into doubt by revisionist historiography that documents the long-standing existence of alternative publics where subordinated groups gathered, formed opinions, and challenged the dominant interpretations of the bourgeois public.[80] Under critical scrutiny, the dominant public sphere comes to seem less like a space for open, democratic interaction, and more like an arena where hegemony is enforced, where dominant powers make their own interests appear like common sense, and where the architecture of domination comes to rely less on coercion, and more on public means of consensus production. Fraser writes:

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[78] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy". in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), 110.

[79] Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989); Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992); Barbara Marshall, "Alternative Media and Oppositional Publics: The Construction of Political Discourse About 'Women' in the English-Canadian Feminist Press". in *In Search of Communicative Space: Essays on Citizenship, Democracy, and the Public Sphere*, eds. A. Parkin and M. Van der Plaat (forthcoming).

> We can no longer assume that the liberal model of the bourgeois public sphere was simply an unrealized utopian ideal; it was also an ideological notion that functioned to legitimate an emergent form of class (and race) rule. . . the official public sphere then was–indeed, is–the prime institutional site for the construction of the consent that defines the new, hegemonic mode of domination".[81]

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[80] Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 73-76.

[81] Ibid, 76.

But should we then dismiss the notion of the public sphere as an idealistic fantasy that has always been coercive in practice? Real life situations such as the one in Mexico do not meet the Habermasian ideal of a singular, institutionalised arena of public negotiation. Even so, the Zapatistas' actions and declarations, and their impact revitalizing civil society, suggests that a process of public negotiation over the meaning of democracy is occurring in Mexico on multiple levels. In Gustavo Esteva's words,

> [The Zapatistas] bring to the public agenda and speak louder what before them was a widely shared open secret, which very few dared to declare: the extended disappointment with democratic realities.[82]

Further, the increasing prevalence of state coercion (as opposed to consensual co-optation) suggests that the Zapatistas' democratic interventions have not been successfully incorporated into state hegemony. How do we describe such a fragmented process of public contestation?

In contrast to the Habermasian assumption that a multiplicity of publics is a deviation from the democratic ideal, Fraser articulates a different ideal of the public sphere: inequality is not bracketed but explicitly "unbracketed'; private issues are not de facto excluded, but any issue has the potential to become a public issue; the normative ideal is not a singular public, but multiple "*subaltern*

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[82] G. Esteva, "The Zapatistas and People's Power", *Capital & Class 68*, Summer (1999):153-183.

counterpublics".[83] Fraser argues that a singular public sphere tends to heighten the tendency of dominant groups to control the public debate. In the history of modern industrial societies, women, gays, lesbians and people have colour have found it necessary to forge subaltern counterpublics to generate identities and a sense of collective interests. Subaltern counterpublics exist in a parallel universe involving a complex relationship of contestation with the official public, and have historically scored many victories by transforming 'private' suffering (e.g. rape, racial discrimination) into public issues.[84] In sum, the public sphere is not understood as a monolithic arena, but as a "structured setting where cultural and ideological contest or negotiation among a variety of publics takes place."[85]

Subaltern counterpublics not only expand the total area of discursive contestation, bringing new issues to the fore of democratic discussion and state regulation, but they provide a space where marginalised groups develop a sense of their identities and interests. Subaltern counterpublics thus serve a dual function. *First*, they help consolidate identity and resistance among subaltern counterpublics. *Second*, they serve to widen, and revitalise democracy by training and encouraging members of subaltern counterpublics to broaden the official public sphere, and confront the tension between universal principles and particular oppressions.[86] They are respites against the dominant culture, and training ground for interaction with the dominant public, and "[i]t is precisely in the dialectic between these two functions that their emancipatory potential resides."[87]

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[83] Nancy Fraser, "Politics, culture, and the public sphere: toward a postmodern conception", in *Social Postmodernism*, eds. L. Nicholson & S. Seidman (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 287-314. Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 80-85.

[84] Nancy Fraser, "Politics, culture, and the public sphere: toward a postmodern conception", in *Social Postmodernism*, ed. L. Nicholson & S. Seidman (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 291.

[85] Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics and Political Cultures", quoted in Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 82-83.

I offer these details on Fraser's theory of subaltern counterpublics because of their important contribution to our understanding of armed democratic rebels. Although the electoral realm is an important terrain of struggle that should not be abandoned, we need to turn our attention towards the Zapatistas' role building *subaltern counterpublics*. This is true in terms of the first function of building a subaltern counter-identity based on indigenous and *campesino* identities, and in terms of the second function of interacting with the official public to broader the meaning of democracy in the dominant public sphere.

i. The construction of subaltern counterpublics

☙ The Zapatista rebellion has played an important role consolidating subaltern counterpublics in Mexico, especially *campesino* and Indigenous counterpublics focussed on the right to democratic self-determination. Although not ratified, the San Andrés accords on indigenous self-determination negotiated between the federal government and the EZLN in the fall of 1995 has become a critical manifesto of Indigenous rights to autonomous cultural and material development. The Zapatistas have refused to continue negotiations with the federal government until these accords are carried out in the form originally agreed to by the EZLN and the federal representative.[88] The Zapatista uprising and the EZLN's presence in the Mexican public sphere has helped consolidate a more important sense of indigenous identity, which is identified as the "dignified root of the Mexican nation", "its struggling present, its inclusive future".[89] In the words of the Zapatistas:

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[86] Ibid; Marshall, "Alternative Media and Oppositional Publics", 2.

[87] Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 82.

> The indigenous peoples are national actors today, and their destinies and their platforms form part of the national discussion. The word of the first inhabitants of these lands now holds a special place in public opinion. The "indigenous" is no longer tourism or artisanry, but rather the struggle

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[88] The San Andres accords were revised by the COCOPA (the all-party Congressional Committee For Concord and Pacification) in December 1996. Although the federal government originally agreed to this interpretation, they soon reneged and came back with a watered-down version, arguing that the COCOPA version gave too much autonomy to indigenous communities and would lead to the 'balkanization' of Mexico. Some observers suggest that the federal government's real concern is not political disintegration, but a reluctance to hand over resources to indigenous groups, a transfer legislated in the COCOPA version. This development might threaten the interests of multinationals eager to exploit the rich timber, oil, and pharmaceutical resources of the Lacandón rainforest. In July of 1999, the state congress, dominated by the ruling PRI, unilaterally approved its own law on indigenous rights and culture, which critics deemed as unhelpful to the peace process, and contrary to the spirit of the San Andrés Accords. SIPAZ, Servicio Internacional para la Paz, "SIPAZ Report November 1999", (1999), Newsgroup: chiapas-i@eco.utexas.edu, Posted October 28 1999, Accessed November 2 1999. For an evaluation of the government's latest offer at peace talks, see the SIPAZ report, which can also be accessed at http://www.serve.com/sipaz1/vol4no4/anale.htm.

[89] EZLN, "V Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle", (1998), Online, Internet, http://www.ezln.org/archive/quinta-lacandona-eng.html.

against poverty and dignity.[90]

The democratic demands of the San Andrés accord were not created out of thin air, but reflected the Zapatistas' desire to preserve indigenous traditions of consensus building and community-level democracy. The accords themselves were not unilaterally declared by the Zapatistas, but came out of a process of dialogue between various indigenous groups.[91] Zapatista supporters see democracy as both a way of organizing social life on a local communal level, and as a weapon capable of building identities to resist the historic authoritarianism of the Mexican state. Marcos writes:

> Collective work, democratic thought, and majority rule are more than just a tradition among indigenous people; they have been the only way to survive, to resist, to be proud, and to rebel.[92]

The Zapatistas continually attempt to establish a group identity based on democratic principles. This is manifest in the organisational structure of the EZLN. Although the evidence is somewhat contradictory,[93] the EZLN appear to be a relatively democratic organisation which resists vanguardism, and is rooted in indigenous traditions of direct, participatory democracy through community assemblies.[94] One reason that the guerrillas wear ski-masks is to the Mexican tradition of *caudillismo*, where one personality functions as the paramount leader. Although clearly the personality of Marcos has stood out and intrigued the international press, he functions as a spokesperson and military strategist, and is not the head of the EZLN. On numerous occasions Marcos has emphasized his subsidiary role in the uprising:

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[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Shadows of Tender Fury*, 46.

[93] Although most commentators concur on the democratic organization of the EZLN, some commentators such as Andres Oppenheimer, claim that the EZLN is run by a group of middle-class mestizo Mexico-city Marxists, and that Fernando Yañez (Commander in Chief Germán) is the behind-the-scenes leader of the Zapatistas. Andres Oppenheimer, *Bordering on Chaos. Guerrillas, Stockbrokers, Politicians, and Mexico's Road to Prosperity* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1996), 46.

> I have the honor to have as my superiors the best men and women of the various ethnic groups: Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Chol, Tojolabal, Mama and Zoque. I have lived with them for over ten years and I am proud to obey and serve them with my arms and soul...They are my commanders and I will follow them down any path they choose. They are the collective and democratic leadership of the EZLN, and their acceptance of a dialogue is as true as their fighting hearts and their concern about being tricked once again.[95]

The top council of the EZLN, the CCRI-CG (Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee, General Command) is democratically elected by base communities, and these members can be recalled if they do not comply with the popular will. The CCRI is a council of Indigenous leaders who are informed by an unknown number of clandestine committees representing the major ethnic groups, and who are in turn, responsive to the indigenous communities. Although the military is organized in a typical, hierarchical command structure, strategic political and organizational decisions are made at the community level, rather than by military leaders. The decision to hold the uprising itself was made democratically by the involved indigenous communities.

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[94] Cuninghame and Corona, "A Rainbow at Midnight: Zapatistas and Autonomy."

[95] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Shadows of Tender Fury*, 84.

Efforts to consolidate collective democratic identities are also seen in EZLN's strategies to mobilise civil society. In June of 1995, the EZLN became frustrated with the government refusal to negotiate any national demands, so they responded by organizing a massive plebiscite (*Consulta*), letting Mexicans and foreigners vote on the EZLN demands and the future strategies of the rebel group. The *Consulta Nacional e Internacional* was carried out in August 1995, with participation by 1.2 million Mexicans and more than 100,000 people outside Mexico. The Consulta voted that the EZLN should convert itself into an independent political force, and in response, the Zapatista Front of National Liberation (FZLN), an independent civilian political force, was formed at the end of December. The EZLN also consulted its entire membership when it was time to decide whether or not to sign the federal government's proposal for peace.[96] In March of 1999 the FZLN organized another *Consulta* that allowed three million Mexicans at home and abroad to vote on the San Andrés Accords on indigenous rights and culture.[97]

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[96] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Shadows of Tender Fury*, 234.

[97] Laurence Iliff, "DMN / Mexican referendum a success, rebels say", (1999),

Not only have the Zapatistas helped strengthen identities based on democracy and resistance within their own organization, but they have inspired, and helped develop this identity within *campesino* and indigenous counterpublics more generally. Several important movements towards indigenous and *campesino* self-determination have been inspired by the Zapatista uprising, the most notable being the move towards autonomous municipalities. The National Indigenous Convention, established in response to the Zapatistas' National Democratic Convention (CND), holds as their primary goal a national plan to establish autonomous multiethnic regions.[98] Ten months after the uprising, five regions in Chiapas declared themselves "autonomous multiethnic regions" – an area that included at least half the state.[99] While a total of thirty-two regions set up parallel indigenous, elected autonomous municipalities, at least four municipalities have been forcefully dismantled under the explicit direction of Governor Albores, each incursion creating a greater number of displaced persons in the state.[100] Besides

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Newsgroup: chiapas-l@burn.ucsd.edu, Posted March 24 1999, Accessed March 25 1999.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Lynn Stephen, "The Zapatista Army of National Liberation and the National Democratic Convention". *Latin American Perspectives 22*, no. 4 (1995): 97.

[100] Enlace Civil, A.C., "Presentation by Enclave Civil to the Encuentro between Civil Society and the EZLN, November 19, 1998." (1998), Newsgroup: chiapas-l@burn.ucsd.edu. Posted December 1 1998, Accessed December 2 1998. In Governor Albores' words, "There are no autonomous municipalities in Chiapas. There are 8 neuralgic zones in Chiapas", which "compel the authorities to intervene, because there is only one way in Chiapas, and that is through the Constitution". According to Albores, the attack on El Bosque was an attack on "bandits". During this attack, which involved 3,000 members of the Public Security Forces, Judicial Police and federal Army, at least eleven Zapatista

these overt constructions of alternative, democratic institutions, the Zapatista uprising encouraged a wave of land seizures, as landless *campesinos* were inspired to commit courageous acts to promote their right to self-determination in the form of a piece of land. Sebastian Lopez, a Tzotzil Indian peasant who led the seizure of a 300 hectare ranch, said, "They [the Zapatistas] have opened the doors for all of us. The government has to take us into account".[101]

Although the Zapatistas have not orchestrated all of these movements, there is clearly an element of EZLN inspiration, and a commonality of spirit with the general principles of indigenous and *campesino* self-determination and autonomous development espoused by the EZLN. Although the Zapatistas are a military movement, they have inspired tremendous debate, discussion, and construction of democratic counterpublics in the state of Chiapas.[102] These

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supporters were killed, including a one-year old child. The remains of eight *campesinos* detained in the attack on the municipality were sent back to the community in cardboard boxes several days later. El Bosque is strategically important as a middle-ground separating the Zapatista controlled Lacandón jungle from the rest of the state. "Interview with Chiapas Governor Roberto Albores Guillen", *Processo* June 21 (1998), Online, Internet, http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/mexico/chiapas/communities/albores.html. "The Dismantling of Autonomous Municipality Leaves 11 Dead", (1999), Online, Internet, http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/mexico/news061398.html., and http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/mexico/mil/ElBosque.html.

[101] Kieran Murray, "The Last Resort". *New Statesman & Society*. March 18, (1994), 20.

[102] Womens' counterpublics have also been revitalized by the Zapatista uprising, but spatial constraints prohibit an exploration of this important development. See "Zapatista Women * Mujeres Zapatistas", http://www.actlab.utexas.edu/~geneve/zapwomen/; Neil Harvey, "The Zapatistas, Radical Democratic Citizenship, and Women's Struggles". *Social-Politics* 5, no. 2, (1998): 158-187.

counterpublics work to resist the authoritarian powers of local and national elites, and the dominant visions of a globalized economy where *campesinos* serve as wage labor on corporate plantations.

ii. Interacting with the official public: the Zapatistas' democratic vision

☙ A subaltern counterpublic is not only a place of identity formation. It is not an "enclave", but a "public", interacting with the official public in the hopes of expanding its discourse into broader political, economic, cultural settings.[103] In part, this can be described as a struggle to move from a position of a "weak public", where opinions are formed but decision making does not occur, to a "strong public", where both opinion formation and decision making is possible.[104] While the quintessential example of a strong public is a sovereign parliament, it is useful to think of weak and strong publics on a spectrum of relative decision-making power, rather than as fixed institutional forms.[105] Although the Zapatistas do not want to become the state, the do want to become a *stronger* public that provides input into decision making at varying levels of government, and contributes to legally-binding decisions on important matters, such as the rights to indigenous self-determination embodied in the San Andrés accords. In an interview with *La Jornada*, Marcos stated:

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[103] Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 82.

[104] Ibid, 90.

[105] While the possible interaction between weak and strong publics is unspecified, what Fraser makes abundantly clear in her argument is the inadequacy of the liberal model, which posits a sharp separation between state and civil society. Fraser argues that what is needed is a "post-socialist" conception that allows us to envision a "a greater role for (at least some) public spheres than mere autonomous opinion formation removed from authoritative decision making. Such a post-bourgeois conception would enable us to think about strong and weak publics, as well as about various hybrid forms". Ibid, 92.

> It is not enough for us to organize all those people who are very angry with the economic model. How can we do that so it can be heard? And then: how can we do that so that word has weight?[106]

While the Zapatistas seek to influence decisions of various levels of government, they have been criticised for refusing to directly participate in electoral politics. While they formed a civilian offshoot of the EZLN in 1996, the Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (the FZLN), this is not an organisation which officially endorses political parties, nor does it have any plans to transform itself into a political party. This has generated criticism within Mexico, and abroad. As one article in the *New York Times* chastised:

> While the rest of Mexico is passionately embroiled in the presidential campaign, the Zapatista leader rejected electoral politics and disdained all political parties.[107]

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[106] "La Jornada interview with Marcos", (1999), Newsgroup: Nuevo Amanecer Press, Posted November 18 1998, Accessed November 19, 1998.

[107] Reporting on the Zapatista struggle internationally is not only highly erratic, but coverage in major U.S. newspapers often appears to be taken from PRI propaganda. One of the most extreme examples of distorted reporting of the Chiapas conflict can be found in the articles written by Julia Preston for the New York Times. For an excellent deconstruction of one of these articles, see Harvey

To understand why the Zapatistas have not converted themselves into a political party, we need to consider two factors: 1) the difficulty of equal participation in the electoral process, and 2) the fact that the EZLN's democratic objectives exceed electoral strategies. Inconsistencies still plague the electoral realm, or what Chiapas-observer Harry Cleaver more harshly labels, “the meaningless spectacle of Mexican electoral politics”.[108] While the nomination for the leadership of the PRI has become a more open process, there are still signs that the electoral process remains highly inconsistent. There have been five governors in Chiapas in the last six and a half years, only two of whom have been elected.[109] The current governor, Roberto Albores Guillen, has been described as a “throwback to the prototypical southern U.S. politicans who used to block the school house doors and sic their dogs and their lynch mobs upon anti-segregation activists”.[110] In his last homily as the Bishop of San Cristobal de las Casas,

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Cleaver, “NYT’ Julia Preston, Working for the PRI in Mexico”, (1999), Newsgroup: chiapasl@burn.ucsd.edu, posted August 31 1999, Accessed November 1 1999, gopher://mundo.eco.utexas.edu/0R432271-454884-/mailing/chipas…/1999.09.01-07%20(September11/5/99).

[108] Ibid.

[109] John Ross, “More fear and loathing in Chiapas by John Ross”, (1999), Newsgroup: Chiapas 95@eco.utexas.edu., Posted September 2, 1999, Accessed September 5 1999.

[110] Governor Albores' indifference to the indigenous plight has been displayed in many graphic, and bloody incidents. Three months after becoming governor, he implemented a plan to violently dismantle autonomous municipalities. Another one of Albores' “stunts” was to pay PRI party members to dress up like Zapatistas and make a public display of turning in their arms. In return, they were given 20 head of cattle, a sport utility vehicle, and their guns back. Albores Guillen is not just a local tyrant, uncontrolled by PRI officials; Interior Secretary Francisco Labastida, the official candidate who won the race to lead the PRI into

Samuel Ruiz stated: "There is a great passion for social change or transformation . . . But what also is evident is the corruption of our system, which exhibits itself through buying people for their votes and every other kind of pressure."[111]

Although the Zapatistas do not want to participate directly in the electoral struggle, they have put forward their support for the electoral process on various occasions. In the Fifth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle they emphasise the importance of the Mexican Congress, and ask it to live up its challenge of being a space in "serve to the Nation rather than to the president-in-turn."[112] In the same document, they also challenge "honest Political Parties committed to popular causes" to support the process of consultation on the San Andrés Accords. When Marcos was questioned about his criticism of the opposition PRD party, he stated:

> Let this be clear: it is a disagreement with a political line that right now permeates the PRD; it is not a disagreement with the electoral struggle, much less with the peaceful civil struggle, much less with the PRD as a party.[113]

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the 2000 elections, personally appointed him as substitute governor. Ibid.

[111] Alejandro Ruiz, "Bishop Ruiz: Vote Buying Still Rampant", (1999),. Newgroup: chiapas-n@burn.ucsd.edu. Posted November 2 1999, Accessed November 2 1999.

[112] EZLN, "V Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle", (1998), Online, Internet, http://www.ezln.org/archive/quinta-lacandona-eng.html.

[113] La Jornada, "Sub. Marcos Interview with UNAM Radio, La Jornada, 11-7-95", (1995), Newsgroup: Chiapas95@mundo.eco.utexas.edu, Posted November 8 1995, Accessed November 1 1999, gopher://mundo.eco.utexas.edu/0R154912-161830-/mailing/chiapas.../1995.11%20(November 11/5/99).

In an interview with *La Jornada*, Marcos conceded that they had made mistakes in their criticism of Mexican political parties, but pointed out some of the advantages of remaining outside the formal political system:

> There are more advantages than disadvantages in the fact that we don't enter into the basic code of political relations. It allows us a certain distance, more depth in analysis, a more critical position.[114]

Participation in the electoral process would be risky, given the extreme level of inequity, and the strong chance that the final outcome would tainted by corruption and vote-buying. Although this is an important context of understanding Zapatista strategy, their reluctance to directly participation in electoral politics also requires a broader understanding of democratic struggle. As argued above, the struggle for democracy is not just about free and fair elections, but includes efforts to deepen debate in the official public, and strengthen the participation of subaltern counterpublics. Although the Zapatistas demand fair elections, they realise that elections are not enough to achieve meaningful democracy:

> The struggle for democracy in Mexico is not only a struggle for fair, free, and just elections; multi-party participation; or a change in power. *It is, above all, the struggle for politics to be 'citizen-ized" if you will.* The struggle to find new ways, to create spaces, to nurture initiatives which give voice and a place to those who make a nation: the workers of the

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[114] "La Jornada interview with Marcos", (1999), Newsgroup: Nuevo Amanecer Press, Posted November 18 1998, Accessed November 19, 1998.

> field and the city, the indigenous, the squatters, the housewives, the teachers, students, retired and pensioned, small businessmen, professionals, employees, handicapped, HIV positives, intellectuals, artists, researchers, unemployed, homosexuals, lesbians, youth, women, children and elderly, the everyone who, under different names and face, dress and name themselves, the people. (emphasis mine) [115]

The struggle to "citizen-ize" politics in Chiapas, and participate in the public sphere are difficult enough, given the tremendous inequity of resources. Governor Albores reportedly has sent agents to news-stands across Chiapas to confiscate issues of *La Jornada*, a newspaper that gives detailed attention to injustices in the state.[116] Besides unequal access to the official public sphere, members who challenge official claims are often vulnerable to state-endorsed violence.[117]

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[115] EZLN, "Some Reflections about FOBAPROA", (1998), Newsgroup: Zapatistas Online, Posted October 30, 1998. Accessed November 1, 1998.

[116] John Ross, "More fear and loathing in chiapas by John Ross", (1999), Newsgroup: Chiapas 95@eco.utexas.edu., Posted September 2, 1999, Accessed September 5 1999. gopher://mundo.eco.utexas.edu/OR389242-402647-/mailing/c…/1999.09.01-07%20(September 11/5/99).

[117] In July 1998 a group of non-profit organizations in Chiapas compiled a report which documented the extensive impact of "low-intensity warfare" on civilian organizations in Chiapas. They found that alongside the usual violence against political parties, indigenous groups, and *campesino* organizations, there was a parallel phenomena of 'psychological warfare' waged against new civilian targets: "foreigners; researchers and academics; Mexican human rights activists; independent women's organizations and movements; as well as journalists and the diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casa". This report documented a long list of direct and indirect threats, and found that women within these organisations bore the primary burden of this violence. Ines Castro Apreza, "Psychological Warfare in an Urban Context. Threats, hostilities, and attacks received by civil

Yet even with the inequality of opportunity between publics, Zapatista-inspired subaltern counterpublics have not remained isolated in a jungle fortress. Instead, they have challenged the conception of democracy provided by the official public, and put forth a more radical conception that unites demands for political democracy with economic justice, and emphasises the importance of a participatory democratic process. The Zapatistas recognize that democratization requires a process of numerous subaltern counterpublics operating within the public sphere to challenge the hegemony of the PRI and its globalization project. The Zapatistas have put forward an alternate conception of social struggle that is not based on a revolutionary vanguard, but on a loose network of autonomous social movements working together towards common goals, at the same time respecting their differences.[118] Support for the Zapatistas does not require subordination to an ultimate military cause, or even to one political party. In the first month of the Zapatista uprising, they EZLN issued a statement calling for the solidarity and support of the "North American people and government", as well as "all workers, poor peasants, teachers, students, progressive and honest intellectuals, housewives, professionals, and all independent political

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organizations in Chiapas", (1999), Online, Internet, http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/mexico/mil/psychWarfare.html.

[118] Cuninghame and Corona argue that this style of doing politics is a direct outgrowth of indigenous practices of seeking conensus through dialogue, rather than a more procedural democratic conception of majority rule. Patrick Cuninghame and Carolina Ballesteros Coronoa, "A Rainbow at Midnight: Zapatistas and Autonomy", *Capital and Class* 66, Autumn (1998).

organizations" in Mexico.[119] They weren't asking that these diverse elements of national and transnational civil society come to the Lacandón rainforest and join their armed struggle. Instead, the Zapatistas asked these groups to join their struggle "in your own way using your own methods, so that we can win the justice and freedom that all Mexicans desire."[120] Although the Zapatistas consistently make appeals for struggle on multiple levels, they also insist on the need for unity around certain normative ideals like democracy and justice.

As Michael Walzer has observed, "the one and the many are often described in philosophical literature as if they were opposed to each other, but in politics and society what we must hope for is their cooperation."[121] The Zapatistas deliver this hope to us, and suggest that economic equality, political participation, and cultural recognition are not separate agendas, but part of a larger democratic project. This comprehensive and complex vision of democracy provides inspiration in our "postsocialist" intellectual age – a time characterised by a general suspicion towards overarching emancipatory projects, a divide between the politics of redistribution and recognition, and decentring of materialist struggles.[122]

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[119] Ibid., 59, 61.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Michael Walzer, "Rescuing Civil Society," *Dissent* Winter (1999): 62-67.

[122] Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus*, (New York: Routledge, 1997), 3; Stephen Gill, "Gramsci and global politics: towards a post-hegemonic research agenda," in *Gramsci, historical materialism and international relations*, ed. Stephen Gill (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1-20.

The Zapatista' democratic vision provides particularly valuable insights about the important connections between political and economic rights that are obscured in minimalist democratic thought. A democratic system of inclusion and participation is fundamentally at odds with a socio-economic situation of impoverishment – a situation that is inherently characterised by exclusion, inequality, violence, and the absence of personal autonomy.[123] As is often noted, the Zapatistas have not used conventional Marxist rhetoric. Even so, they continually emphasise the importance of a democratically controlled economic system to possessing substantive political rights. Political rights cannot exist without economic rights. Marcos writes:

> Today in Mexico, there is no widespread democracy. And there is also no national economy. During the last 15 years it has been destroyed and its ruins have been sold. The economic model whose development demanded the abandonment of the struggle for democracy has done nothing but increase the poverty and share it with more Mexicans, and concentrated wealth among a smaller number of people.[124]

Marcos' language is poetic and replete with literary references, but he frequently insists that the EZLN's struggle is not just a question of asserting an alternative identity: "in the middle of the national problem is the economic problem".[125] Democracy is seen as fundamentally incompatible with a transnationalised nation state that is unaccountable to its own citizens. To democratically determine the substance of the dominant social project, either locally or nationally, government must have the power to implement the social project, and not be confined to the narrow role of protecting negative liberty.

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[123] Carlos Vilas, "Latin American in the "New World Order": Prospects for Democracy", 275.

[124] EZLN, "Some Reflections about FOBAPROA", (1998), Newsgroup: Zapatistas Online, Posted October 30, 1998. Accessed November 1, 1998.

Achieving the goal of economic and political citizenship will be difficult, if not impossible under the reigns of a transnationalised state operating a very thin type of procedural democracy. For this reason, "neoliberalism" is a particularly important Zapatista target,[126] representing the powerful imperative to obey the dictates of global financial powers, instead of listening to the demands of national citizens. Self-determination and the preservation of specific indigenous identities are inextricably linked to struggles against global capital. Or in the more vivid language of the National Indigenous Congress:

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[125] "La Jornada interview with Marcos", (1999), Newsgroup: Nuevo Amanecer Press, Posted November 18 1998, Accessed November 19, 1998.

[126] Two years before the uprising, Marcos' words identified the importance of neoliberalism to the poverty in Chiapas: "In times past, wood, fruits, animals, and men went to the metropolis through the veins of exploitation, just as they do today. Like the banana republics, but at the peak of neoliberalism and "libertarian revolutions," the Southeast continues to export raw materials, just as it did 500 years ago. It continues to import capitalism's principal product: death and misery." Subcomandante Marcos, "Chiapas: The Southeast in Two Winds A Storm and a Prophecy", (1992), Online, Internet. http://www.ezln.org/SE-in-two-winds.htm. In 1998, a dialogue between EZLN and civil society produced a similar diagnosis: "Neoliberalism is the most dehumanizing socioeconomic model, it is a factory for misery and exclusion for the benefit of the great transnational capital and their local allies, it sets in place the impunity of the market over the needs and aspirations of the people, militarizing the citizens' decisions and places. The accelerated appropriation and privatization of the national wealth promotes the fragmentation and de-nationalization of the territory." FZLN, "Civil society closing speech", (1998), Newsgroup: chiapas-l@burn.ucsd.edu, Posted November 23, 1998, http://burn.ucsd.edu/archives/chiapas-l/1998.11/msg00313.html.

> . . . despite the attempts they have made to destroy us . . . our cultures, expressions, regulatory systems and forms of life, organisation and display have survived and remained alive, creative and full of energy, but the effects of that neoliberal project, which sinks its sharpened teeth into our flesh and injects it fatal globalizing and exclusionary venom, must be ever more urgently overcome.[127]

The Zapatistas have called for a shift of power away from supra-national institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the IMF, and back towards democratically accountable state structures. The Zapatistas do not make these calls for democratic economic control in isolation, but have had tremendous success mobilizing other subaltern counterpublics in Mexico[128] and around the world. The spark of an international Zapatista-counterpublic was lit in 1996 when the Zapatistas hosted 4000 activists from five continents at the first "Intercontinental Gathering for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism".[129] An

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[127] National Indigenous Congress, "Mexico: Indigenous Peoples Congress Statement, October 1998", (1998), Newsgroup: A-Infos News Services, Posted October 24 1998, http://www.ainfos.ca/.

[128] Demonstrations in support of the EZLN and democracy have been held around the country since the time of the uprising. Mexican civil society showed its unity in the "March for Peace in Chiapas", which was attended by some 80,000 to 100,000 people in the Zócalo of Mexico City. The EZLN's September, 1997 march to Mexico City drew crowds that not only filled up the Zócalo to capacity, but backed up streets for kilometers.

[129] On a cultural level, the Zapatista struggle has inspired various musical and

Intercontinental Meetings was held in Spain, and resulted in the formation of a network called "People's Global Action" which organizes local movements against the furthering of globalization projects and its agents such as the WTO. The first American Encounter against Neoliberalism and for Humanity held in Chiapas has inspired a second American Encounter Against Neoliberalism and for Humanity is planned for December, 1999 in Belem Brazil, organized in conjunction with the landless movement in Brazil.[130] The Zapatistas wrote about the evolution of this network in the Fifth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle:

> . . . we have also, together with others, extended bridges to the entire world and we have contributed to the creation (alongside men and women of the 5 continents) of a great network which struggles through peaceful

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artistic projects, one of the most popular being the videos and music written by Zack de la Rocha, lead vocalist of the popular American rock-funk group, *Rage Against the Machine*. At a round table meeting with de la Rocha, as well as other Mexican rock groups, Marcos spoke of this meeting of ideas: "Perhaps what happened is there was a meeting. There were words that met, but, above all, there were, and are, feelings that met. If there are songs from these groups that could easily appear to be communiques, and if there are communiques that could be lines to songs, it is not by virtue of who is writing them, no, it is because they are saying the same thing, they are reflecting the same thing, that underground "other," which, by being "different," organizes itself in order to resist, in order to exist." Subcomandante Marcos, "Marcos on Underground Culture and Resistance", (1999), Listserve: chiapas-n@burn.uscsd.edu. Posted October 28' 1999, Accessed October 29, 1999.

[130] Harry Cleaver, "Second American Encounter Against Neoliberalism and for Humanity", (1999), Online, Internet, http://www.eco.utexas.edu/Homepages/Faculty/Cleaver/2ndencounteren.html. For a summary of some of the results of the First Intercontinental Encounter, see Cleaver's introduction for an Italian book compiling Encuentro documents which is available on the Internet at http://geocities.com/CapitolHill/3849/italy_book.html. Harry Cleaver addresses the topic of computer linked global social movements in another essay, "Computer-linked Social Movements and the Global Threat to Capitalism", which is also available on the Internet at http://www.eco.utexas.edu/Homepages/Faculty/Cleavaer/polnet.html.

> means against neoliberalism, and resists by fighting for a new and better world.[131]

In short, the Zapatistas have made strong connections between globalised economies, and lack of meaningful democractic participation. These connections contest the official public's vision of low intensity democracy, and have inspired the struggles of subaltern counterpublics in Mexico and abroad to put forward a more substantive, radical notion of popular democratic control over political and economic development.

Conclusion

☙ Given the intensity of actions by the Mexican military and paramilitary organisations in Zapatistas territory, it seems patently clear that the Zapatistas struggle for democracy is far from over. There is nothing to be gained from idealising their struggle, or minimising the severity of recent military efforts to crush the Zapatistas and terrorise their social support base. The Zapatistas' attention to multiplicity, and cautious use of violence might earn them the respect of Western political theorists (present author included), but the results are paradoxical. The Zapatistas unwillingness to 'lead' the revolution makes them more democratic, but this is a slow, and onerous struggle, which leaves them open to criticism, persecution, and co-optation. It would not be the first time a revolutionary group has been absorbed into state hegemony – one need only look to the numerous precedents in Mexican history, from the development of corporatism after the Mexican revolution, to the state incorporation of student protestors after 1968.

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[131] EZLN, "V Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle", (1998), Online, Internet, http://www.ezln.org/archive/quinta-lacandona-eng.html.

Aware of the danger of co-optation, the Zapatistas have refused to accept the government's offer to buy peace, insisting that their goals are much larger than just material improvement for their communities. In Marcos' words:

> If we had done so, if we had surrendered, if we had sold ourselves, we would now have good houses, good schools, hospitals, machinery for working the land, better prices for our products, good food. But we chose not to sell ourselves, we chose not to surrender. Because it so happens that we are indigenous and we are also guerreros. And guerreros are guerreros because they are fighting for something. . . . If we had surrendered, if we had sold ourselves, we would no longer have been poor, but others would have continued to be so.[132]

Even with all of the obstacles, it is important to see their struggle as a critical piece of a pro-democratic movement that challenges the shape of actually existing Mexican democracy. This can only occur when theorists move beyond a narrow conceptualisation of democracy as electoral politics, and consider the importance of subaltern counterpublics and the public sphere in the democratisation process.

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[132] Ibid.

Although the EZLN continues to endure the violence of so-called low-intensity warfare, their battle to broaden the conception of democracy within the public sphere to include the demands for indigenous and *campesino* self-determination has been at least partially successful. The Zapatistas have demanded a redistribution of resources, the right to self-determination, and the participation of civil society in the governance of Mexico. The Zapatistas have also helped put issues of land, economic redistribution, and indigenous self-determination squarely back in the public sphere, and challenged the authority of the PRI to govern using centralist, authoritarian measures. The Zapatistas have helped loosen the PRI's hold on Mexico and helped indigenous people gain visibility.[133] Most EZLN demands remain unfulfilled, but they are now more firmly on the public agenda. In an interview, Marcos recognized the partial success of the EZLN strategy of armed pedagogical struggle:

> This approach has worked. Proof of its effectiveness can be found in the changes that have taken place since the first of January [1994]. The federal government's sudden attention to Indian questions comes only after the first of January. The cult of social-liberalism and everything it implies has been suddenly set aside...all of a sudden, the success of the Mexican economy is being questioned...We have a clear sense of the uprising's impact, and we think that non-militarized organizations at the national level also understand that these changes are a product of the

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[133] Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 71.

armed uprising of desperation.[134]

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[134] Zapatista Army of National Liberation, *Zapatistas!*, 141.

CHAPTER 6

SOLIDARITY

In his creative interdisciplinary work on geography and ethics, Yi-Fu Tuan addresses the question of whether material and technological 'progress' has made us a better, more moral species. Tuan argues that the moral imagination has expanded both outward, and inward (1989, 170-1). The sphere of moral concern is enlarged so that it now embraces the whole world, leading to increased concern for those that exist beyond our immediate realm, as well as increased concern for beings of a different race, gender, ability or species. At the same time, moral imagination has also extended inward, which has lead to both a deepened potential for self-reflection, as well as a heightened egotism, narcissism, and self-obsessed paralysis. This expanded moral imagination has great potential, but it is inherently contradictory, leading to more difficult ethical decisions when we factor in the effects of our actions on distant others, and distant arenas of inner life. As Tuan writes, "[b]eing good is much easier if we know less about the condition of the world, and the labyrinthine ways of our own mind" (1989, 171). How do we carve out a path from colonialism to solidarity, away from ignorance and towards knowledge of reciprocity – a view of the Other as subject rather than an object? (Santos 1995, 27; Smith 2001). This is not an easy or inevitable trajectory, and requires constant vigilance to avoid the ubiquitous colonial tendency to "translate everything into our own terms" (Harvey 1999, 118). As Joan Tronto writes, "[w]hether we can conceive of a way to think of morality that extends some form of sympathy further than our own group remains perhaps the fundamental moral question for contemporary life." (1993, 59).

The tension embodied in this question is found within resistance to neo-liberal globalism. On the one hand, global capital has made the world smaller, leading to a heightened sense of possibilities for cooperation and collaboration by those who experience the blunt end of its disciplinary stick. On the other hand, however, there is no natural or inevitable progression from concern for those near and dear, to those who suffer in places that are very different, far away, and isolated from the mainstream media. While television may connect viewers *with visual imagery of starving children, it is always possible to change the channel. The Internet allows us to be connected to far-away struggles against corrupt governments and pillaging corporations, but it also serves to entertain people with violence and pornography. As liberation theologian Jon Sobrino's observes, "[n]ever before has it been possible to know so much about our world, yet disinterest and ignorance appear to be growing." (1992).*

This chapter explores an emerging paradigm shift in notions of solidarity. Debates over appropriate boundaries of solidarity are hardly new. Tensions between national and international loyalties incited sharp divides within international communist communities. Yet with globalisation, it is increasingly difficult to reduce the issue to a struggle between national and international struggles. While the national retains a clear importance, flows of information and financial capital cast doubt on the ability of state units to maintain sharp, integrated borders. This chapter exposes the problems of assuming that a solidarity of cosmopolitan universalism is the only alternative, but rejects the idea that a retreat to national solidarity projects is the only alternative. Using the case of Zapatismo solidarity, I suggest the importance of a paradigmatic shift towards a solidarity rooted in a politics of scale. This chapter will appear in a collection entitled, Global civil society and its critics (eds.) Gordon Laxer and Sandra Halperin (Palgrave, forthcoming).

We are all Marcos? From cosmopolitan universalism to a politics of scale[1]

> When the dust raised by our uprising settles, people will discover the simple truth: in this whole struggle and thinking process, Marcos was just one more fighter. That's why I say: if you want to

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[1] The author would like to acknowledge major funding sources (SSHRC doctoral fellowship; University of Alberta dissertation scholarship; SSHRC-MCRI globalism research grant), the helpful contributions of Zapatismo activists and researchers (the Global Exchange staff in San Cristobal, Ted Lewis, Wes Rehberg, Jorge Aros, Dan la Botz, Mary Anne Tenuto), and the multiple audiences that gave tough, but helpful comments: Marie-Josée Massicotte, Janet Conway, Sandra Halperin and Gordon Laxer, Thomas Oleson, Ryan Meili, and the globalism research working group at the University of Alberta.

> know who Marcos is, see who's hidden behind the mask, then take a mirror and look at yourself. The face you see there will be the face of Marcos because we are all Marcos.
>
> -Subcomandante Marcos (as cited in Ramonet 2001: 9)

□ Capital has gone global, but can activism go the same route? Does the fact that activists use Zapatista slogans at anti-globalization demonstrations around the world evidence enough to substantiate the claim that 'we are all Marcos'?

This chapter explores the contradictions of transnational solidarity through an examination of *Zapatismo*, the transnational network that lobbies in support of the Zapatista rebels in Chiapas, Mexico.[2] It draws on Internet resources, participant observation, and interviews with solidarity activists to examine the Zapatistas' aspirations and to outline the types of activism involved in *Zapatismo* solidarity. It finds that 'actually existing solidarity,' at least in this case, does not possess the cohesiveness and extensiveness implied by such notions as "global civil society" or even "transnational social movements." What such efforts represent, instead, are "transnational advocacy networks" that exploit deficits in the ethico-political legitimacy of neo-liberal globalism.

Unifying claims such as that 'we are all Marcos', have helped to constitute a master-frame to unite diverse activists contesting neo-liberal globalism. However, this chapter argues that cosmopolitan narratives of solidarity tend to obscure different scales of struggle that are linked across borders by social, economic, and political relations, and that there is a need, therefore, for reflexivity on the part of solidarity workers who use universal ideals or slogans to struggle for liberation on behalf of a distant Other.

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[2] While the term "*Zapatismo*" is also used to refer to the Mexican social movement supporting the EZLN, my focus is on the solidarity networks that have emerged outside the state of Chiapas and Mexico.

I. Naming the enemy: neoliberal globalism and the transnationalized state

> So they tell us about globalization. And we realize that this is what they call this absurd order, where there is only one country – the country of money. Wherefrontiers will disappear, not as the result of brotherhood, but through the hemorrhage that fattens the powerful who have no nation.
>
> -Subcomandante Marcos

❧ Discussions of solidarity movements and networks often take place with little consideration of the ‘recipients’ of these efforts. The focus veers towards new technologies (the Internet), or theoretical debates (postmodernism) of concern to elite mobile participants in struggles for social justice.

To evaluate the efficacy of *Zapatismo* as a solidarity effort, analysts must understand the ‘enemies’ which Zapatista communiqués identify: ‘bad government’, racism against indigenous peoples, patriarchal oppression of indigenous women, and capitalist exploitation of Lacóndon resources. One target stands out as particularly important, but is often overlooked in writings about the

Zapatista: the federal state's adoption of neo-liberal policies.[3] Neo-liberal globalism (henceforth globalism, or NLG) is an ideology that emerged in the 1980s advocating a new mode of capital regulation supporting free capital movement. Its prescriptions include dismantling national economic sovereignty over foreign ownership, investment and exchange; privatizing public enterprises and deregulating businesses; reducing public expenditures, balancing budgets and lowering corporate taxes (Williamson 1993: 18).

One of the most important, but less noted, consequences of these prescriptions has been the dismantling of the "agrarian welfare state" instituted after World War II, and the consequent exacerbation of a global trend of 'depeasantization' (Arrighi 2000: 147).

Since the debt crisis of the 1980s, the Mexican state has enacted policies more oriented to the needs of international creditors than citizens.[4] These policies involved, among other things, the end of the rural welfare state and a significant erosion of the ability of indigenous *campesinos* to determine the shape of their land and livelihoods.[5] Though the election of Vincente Fox in 2000 represented a victory for un-manipulated electoral transitions in Mexico, his corporate-sponsored vision of economic development was continuous with the neo-liberal model established by predecessor presidents Carlos Salinas (1988-1994) and Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000). Neo-liberal strategies are part of a neoliberal historic bloc comprised of transnational capital, the concrete material interests involved in the Chiapas political economy (e.g. cattle ranchers, biotechnology firms, agricultural plantations, oil and gas interests), as well as local caciques and clientalist structures organizing state politics (Barreda 1999; Ross 1998). Working together in effective counterpoint, these forces subverted the already tenuous subsistence agricultural sector in Chiapas by promoting capital-intensive commodity production at the expense of local, democratic control over land and other resources, effectively reducing the means of subsistence for small food producers.[6] Food policy was removed from the public realm and reoriented towards providing "inputs for a transnationalized agro-industrial network" in accordance with the neo-liberal logic of globalism (McMichael and Mhyre 1990: 67-8). According to this "logic", *campesinos* in Chiapas should exploit their comparative advantage in cheap land, labour and water by eating subsidized corn imported from the U.S., and providing a reserve army of labour for agribusiness.[7]

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[3] A comprehensive discussion of the peasant revolt, its socio-economic underpinnings, or the extensive solidarity network it has spawned, is not possible here. For an account of the uprising, see J. Ross, (2000a). For an account of international solidarity movements, see Waterman (1998), and Thomas Oleson's forthcoming doctoral dissertation documenting Zapatismo specifically. For a concise English-language account of the solidarity movement within Mexico, see the ChiapasLink site: "Chapter 1.3 Resistance to Globalization", Accessed October 12, 2000. Internet Website. ChiapasLink. http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch13.htm

[4] In Mexico, the neoliberal reorientation of agricultural policy in the 1980s was in part mandated by conditions of massive debt, but Mexican technocrats believed that neoliberal policies were the key to bringing Mexico into the 'first world'. For example, in 1990 Salinas voluntarily implemented a unilateral liberalization of agricultural trade that dramatically reduced the tariffs, subsidies, guaranteed prices, and credit sources that offered minimal protection for small-scale agriculture. This was done as a voluntary act of good faith to pave the way for NAFTA. On the rise of technocratic neo-liberals in Mexican politics see Teichman (1992), Russell (1994), and Cornelius (1996).

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[5] Between 1981 and 1992, public investment in agriculture declined by 79% (Saxe-Fernández 1994, p. 334). Another indicator of the transnationalized state and the rural sector is the constitutional amendments to Article 27 of the Mexican constitution. In his state of the union address in 1991, President Carlos Salinas (1988-1994) announced that in preparation for signing NAFTA, Article 27 would be amended to 'modernize' Mexico's system of property relations. The amendment effectively terminated the state's historic commitment to land redistribution, opened the door to the privatization of communal land holdings (*ejidos*), legalized land-holding by investors and corporations, and reshaped the social vision of agriculture born out of the Mexican Revolution. Subcomandante Marcos described the constitutional amendment as the most "powerful catalyst in the communities", as it "cancelled all legal possibilities of their holding land." (Zapatista Army of National Liberation 1995b).

[6] Throughout the developing world, staple cereal production for direct human consumption by small-scale producers is being displaced by capital-intensive food production for upper income markets, export, and livestock consumption.

Contrary to the anti-state anarchist bent of anti-globalization activities in advanced industrialized countries, the Zapatistas view the state as critical for providing the conditions that permit the exercise of autonomy, or positive liberty. While the EZLN opposes state violence and its patrimonial use of resources to divide and rule rural populations, it also believes that the federal state is a necessary tool for creating conditions for socio-economic equity and self-determination. While contesting global neo-liberalism, the Zapatistas also focus on more specific, local targets. They defend an indigenous vision of subsistence-based agriculture, and a vision of a state that is democratic and responsive to citizens.[8] They have called for a new pact among the elements of the federation, which puts an end to centralism and grants political, economic, and cultural autonomy to regions, indigenous communities, and municipalities. This multinational vision of autonomous regions within a larger federal entity is not one of indigenous isolation or separation from a larger Mexican state. In Marcos' words:

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[7] The amendment to Article 27 of the Mexican bolstered the comparative advantage strategy by promoting an exodus from subsistence plots, thereby lowering wages in the labour market for farmworkers (*journaleros).*An estimated 15 million peasants are projected to leave the land in the next twenty years in Mexico (Araghi 2001, p. 158).

[8] A critical part of the Zapatistas' ethico-political challenge to the transnationalized Mexican state was their rejection of a narrow procedural vision of democracy, and their call for a new democratic project based on autonomous control over national and local resources. For critics of neo-liberal globalism like the Zapatistas, actually existing procedural democracy is painfully insufficient, particularly when transnationalized states around the world consistently work to undermine citizens' interests. Under these forms of low-intensity democracy, citizens make occasional trips to the ballot box to choose between elite leaders, while power is concentrated in the hands of non-elected economic elites. This is precisely why the Zapatistas insist that they are not interested in simply

> . . . *our aspiration is to become citizens like everyone else*. We want to be part of Mexico, without losing our identity, without being forced to give up our own culture, without ceasing to be Indians. Mexico owes us a debt. A debt two centuries old, which can only settle by recognising our rights (as cited in Ramonet 2001: 8; my emphasis).

Transnational activism is often romanticized as a goal of bottom-up globalization. However, the Zapatista struggle suggests that the federal state continues to be an agent of violence and, also, a potential agent of redistribution. The Zapatistas demand that the Mexican state act on behalf of citizens, rather than of international capital.[9] They have challenged the loss of sovereignty occurring through globalism, and demanded that Mexico provide for the public good,

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changing government, or getting into power themselves. Marcos insists that "the problem isn't one of taking power. We know that the space once occupied by power is now empty. . . What is needed in these times of globalization is to build a new relationship between government and citizens." (Cited in Ramonet 2001). See Gills, Rocamora and Wilson (1993); Wilson (1996); Vilas (1994) on the question of low-intensity democracy in Latin America.

[9] For this reason, the Zapatistas demand the re-negotiation of NAFTA, "given that in its current state it does not take into consideration the indigenous populations and sentences them to death for the crime of having no job qualifications". (Zapatista Army of National Liberation 1995: 157).

respond to the structural irrelevance of large sectors of the Mexican population,[10] and end its reliance on a politics of suppression and subordination to silence dissent at a time of supposed democratic transition.[11] The Zapatistas challenged of the ethico-political legitimacy of the neo-liberal project through a reassertion of nationalist traditions in the Mexican public sphere. [12] They made it more difficult for the PRI to reassert its hegemony, and are at least indirectly responsible for the historic change of regime that occurred with the election of Vincent Fox in 2000 (Gilberth and Otero 2001).

What Zapatista resistance shows is that the transnationalization of the state is never complete. The state's unwillingness to act on behalf of small producers "provokes countertendencies sustained by domestic social groups that have been disadvantaged or excluded" (Cox 1987: 253). There is a contradiction at the heart of the globalist mode of regulation: its inability to absorb large populations in its developmental wake. Rather than simply exploiting people, it makes them structurally irrelevant, and denies them the means of subsistence.[13] Anthropologist June Nash argues that key conflicts of the last decade in the South have been "not so much the struggle against exploitation defined in the workplace as they are the assertion of the right to live in a world with a diminishing subsistence base" (2001: 20). As the goal of broad-based mass 'development' becomes increasingly elusive, international capitalist institutions aim to contain and manage the most noxious and threatening symptoms of this asymmetric system. This weakens state legitimacy and provokes resistance, particularly where the dismantling of welfare systems is linked to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) structural adjustment policies. For these reasons, globalism is increasingly characterised by a politics of supremacy and subordination, as rulers respond to ethico-political legitimacy deficits with more coercion (Gill 1995: 400). Subcomandante Marcos clearly articulates how this relates to the emergence of the Zapatistas: "the Zapatista rebellion is not just an indigenous problem but also the problem of the excluded in this gigantic genocide that the big money and great financial powers of this world are doing that decides to exclude a part of the population at any cost, even at the cost of human lives" (Apple 1997).

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[10] In Marcos' words: "The government has tried to portray Mexico as a First World country. They want to show the World Trade Centre, the big malls, the Zona Rosa, the big, modern cities – Acapuloco, Cancun, Mexico City, Monterrey, Guadalajara. They want to show the tourists the lovely Mexican culture – the mariachis, the folkloric dancing, the beautiful clothing and crafts of the indigenous people. But behind this picture is the real Mexico, the Mexico of the millions of Indians who live in extreme poverty. We have helped to peel off the mask to reveal the real Mexico" (Medea 1995: 58).

[11] Despite Fox's claim to have pulled back the armed forces, checkpoints are routine, and the military is omnipresent. Ledesma Arronte (2001).

[12] On the debates over nationhood in the Mexican public sphere, see Hilbert (1997). It is interesting to contrast the Zapatista's positive view of nationalism with that of the director of Global Exchange, a major non-profit organisation involved in Chiapas: "I see nationalism as fundamentally very dangerous. When those [nationalistic] forces are let loose in conditions of [economic] crisis, fascism and nationalism are birds of a feather." Ted Lewis, Interview with author, January 12, 2001. San Cristobal, Chiapas. Mexico.

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[13] An estimated two billion people will become redundant if neo-liberalism is fully implemented. (Araghi 2001: 151).

II. Solidarity observed: potentials, strengths, and contradictions

☙ Having identified the state as the target of the Zapatista movement, we can now move to an evaluation of the role of solidarity efforts in the Zapitista's struggle for indigenous autonomy in Southern Mexico. What have theses efforts hoped to achieve, and by what criteria can we gauge their success?

Zapatismo solidarity efforts outside Mexico takes three basic forms: human rights lobbying, pedagogical activities, and economic solidarity. Human rights interventions constitute the most prominent form of *Zapatismo* solidarity. Part of this has involved the efforts of activists to publicize the 'low-intensity' war in Chiapas and to lobby their home states to pressure Mexico to concede to Zapatista demands. They have gathered outside courthouses, consulate offices, and legislatures to demand an end to military aid to Mexico, the implementation of the San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture, withdrawal of all Mexican military from Chiapas, and prosecution of paramilitaries.[14] Non-profit organisations like *Enlace Civil* and the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas human rights centre in San Cristobal, Chiapas have trained and sponsored thousands of *campamentistas* (accompaniment volunteers) who, since 1994, have travelled to Chiapas. These projects have played a critical role in ensuring the security of threatened communities.[15]

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[14] For two examples, see de Yoanna (2000); Burke (2000).

[15] The expulsion of foreign activists is one indicator of the success Zapatismo has had exposing Mexico's ongoing militarization. (Stevenson 2000).

A second form of Zapatismo solidarity consists of pedagogical activities that publicize and educate core citizens about low intensity warfare and other injustices in Chiapas. There activities take advantage of the increased information flows made available as a result of globalization processes. As Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink have noted, "[a] dense web of north-south exchange, aided by computer and fax communication, means that governments can no longer monopolize information flows" (1998: 21). Through electronic *Zapatismo* networks, there are daily information flows on military harassment, human rights violations, and the status of resistance.[16] Getting the word out, and educating citizens in developed countries about events in Chiapas is a key goal of activists. For Wes Rehberg, a member of the Strategic Pastoral Action Network, solidarity efforts are important because they "keep the light of public opinion on areas of oppression that otherwise would be obscured from public view," and these efforts "are welcome and invited by those at sites of resistance against such oppression."[17]

The third form of *Zapatismo* solidarity involves efforts to establish direct economic connections with Zapatista communities, and to organise protests against corporate exploitation of the regions' human and material resources. These efforts take myriad forms, including *Pastors for Peace*, which delivers humanitarian aid from the U.S. to impoverished communities; a Zapatista School Bond Program that sells five-dollar school bonds and sends the money to indigenous educators in Chiapas (Escuelas 2000) and fax campaigns in support of Chiapan coffee cooperatives experiencing difficulty collecting from distributors (Christian Peacemaker, 2000). A British web-page, ChiapasLink, describes the type of support activities that have been organized by various communities:

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[16] For example, one email detailed how the military was involved in a project spraying Zapatista communities with a harmful pesticide over the last five years (Castillo 2000).

> In Italy. . . groups have raised money for a project to build a small environmentally friendly electricity turbine in La Realidad, and for a health project in Los Altos. Groups in the US have fundraised to support the construction of the bilingual secondary school in Oventic. .... two alternative water technology projects rely largely on donations. (ChiapasLink 2000)

While such projects represent important attempts to channel wealth from north to south, in general, economic forms of solidarity tend to be more episodic and less routinised in comparison with the two other forms. There are a number of reasons for this. Economic solidarity requires more altruism than human rights activism. Human rights volunteers might plan a stay in Chiapas as part of a life-affirming holiday in Southern Mexico, but economic solidarity involves a much more challenging, ambitious agenda, with less immediate benefits to volunteers. People find it easier to attend 'solidarity' trips to southern climes, than to accept and act on the fact that their entire way of life depends on a system of exploited labour

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[17] W. Rehberg, Interview with author. October 13th, 2000.

and unsustainable modes of production.[18] Solidarity projects reject a discourse of altruism and charity; but its subtle persistence often goes unnoticed.[19] To some extent, appeals to altruism persist as part of a strategy to coax a wealthy (but indebted) public to alter their consumption habits in the name of social justice.[20]

These shortcomings do not arise because economic solidarity efforts are misguided or poorly planned. They are inherent in capitalist domination itself, and are a key dilemma for activists engaged in struggle against the historic bloc of neo-liberal globalism. Projects of economic and anti-corporate solidarity must not only challenge ethico-political legitimacy deficits--they must also address the issue of *institutional* and *material* alternatives to current modes of production. This is particularly difficult given that identities and lifestyles of core solidarity workers are inextricably intertwined with a system of production producing cheap consumer items reliant on low wages and environmental degradation in the periphery. It is important to investigate the extent to which privileged actors unwittingly perpetuate inequitable power relations.

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[18] It is no coincidence that one of Global Exchange's most popular 'reality' tours' gives American citizens' a chance to visit the tropic climes of Cuba – an irony that Global Exchange staff appear well aware of.

[19] On the distinction between altruism and solidarity see Esterovic & Smith (2001).

[20] Schor reports that two-thirds of U.S. citizens in the $75,000+ income bracket stated that they would need an increase of 50-100% of their income to be satisfied. More generally, her research documents a state of psychological denial about consumption and spending patterns (1998).

III. Fighting for a global civil society?

☙ There is a tendency in the otherwise diverse and multi-faceted academic writing on globalization to view transnational solidarity efforts as connected to the retreat of state power and its displacement to transnational and subnational levels (Lipschutz 1992). Effective resistance to globalism is therefore seen as dependent on transcending national boundaries and establishing a global civil society (GCS) and cosmopolitan governance (Held and Archibugi 1995). Cosmopolitan imagery is not just academic, but has a strong resonance in popular culture, appearing in everything from Coke commercials to rap videos, to political speeches about the new global order. While it usually self-presents as an oppositional perspective, upon closer examination cosmopolitanism also displays qualities of a new hegemonic consensus that is often blind to its own privilege (Brennan 1997). Mobility is the new norm, and placelessness a virtue. Grateful Dead lyricist and cyberguru, John Perry Barlow, holds his powerbook up to the sky and tells the crowd, “This is where I live now!” (Adbusters 2001).

The cosmopolitan emphasis on the possibility of new forms of political agency beyond national boundaries is a useful counterpoint to monolithic portrayals of globalization and of nation states. It draws our attention to how space-time compression has not only facilitated capital movement, but makes new forms of social interaction possible. It offers a vision of two competing globalization processes: one engineered from ‘above’, and another emerging from ‘below’ in the uncharted territory of global civil society.[21] Top-down globalization, a globalist mode of regulation characterised by integrated financial capital markets and global market discipline, is accompanied in varying degrees by a bottom-up globalization of resistance and transnational solidarity movements. Thus, while developments in information technology are facilitating the integration of financial markets, they are also allowing diverse communities around the world to gain knowledge of global suffering and injustice. This consciousness then works to establish the "initial condition for a true universalization of the idea of justice and the undertaking of the necessary actions that will lead to its progressive realisation" (Vilas 1995: 280).

By advancing the interests of transnational financial capital, neo-liberal globalism creates contradictions and disruptive counter-hegemonic forces. NLG is neither fixed nor complete, and should be understood as a dialectical process rather than as a fixed conceptual entity.[22] The transnationalization of the state is never complete: "the further it advances, the more it provokes countertendencies sustained by domestic social groups that have been disadvantaged or excluded" (Cox 1987: 253). As national governments surrender power (willingly or unwillingly) to transnational capital, legitimacy deficits emerge, giving rise to myriad social movements that challenge the loss of sovereignty and the emptiness of procedural democracy.

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[21] Although it has been used by other writers in various contexts and meanings, the phrase "*globalization from below*" is attributed to Richard Falk (1998). Falk views the development of globalization from below as an open question, which is made questionable by the absence of a coherent alternative to neo-liberalism, and the piecemeal nature of bottom-up critiques.

[22] For a discussion of dialectical methodology and its relationship to the study of globalization, see Harvey (1996: 46-48).

The Zapatistas are one such movement exploiting ethico-political legitimacy deficits beyond national boundaries. Yet dominant globalist depictions of the Zapatista struggle would imply that this group is living up in the sky with John Perry and other cyberwarriors – not cornered by the thousands of Mexican militia and paramilitaries positioned in the Lacandón jungle of South Eastern Chiapas. More specifically, analysis of the Zapatistas tends to emphasise qualitative breaks from the past (e.g. "postmodern rebellion"), inadvertently lumping together *campesino* self-defence groups together with Internet activists. A focus on discontinuity tends to minimise continuity with historical struggles,[23] and belies the importance of struggles to re-embed economic and political control in democratic state structures accountable to national citizenry. The Zapatistas have clearly challenged a protagonist of global capital accumulation that limits the ability of the Mexican state (and the multiple nations within state boundaries) to be autonomous and self-determining. At the same time, it is not clear that these struggles can be described as primarily global, or even primarily transnational. Targets are both more specific, and rooted in specific places and substantive visions of democratic life. At the same time, this struggle is not exclusively local; the Zapatistas call for the implementation of universal human rights, and see themselves as a mirror of oppression throughout the world. How, then, should we conceptualise these solidarity linkages?

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[23] The emphasis on discontinuity has been focussed around the 'postmodern' label. In North America, it is difficult to find left-leaning analyses of the Zapatistas that did *not* use the postmodern label, or insinuate a radical disjuncture from so-called 'modern' political forms. See for example, Burbach (1994); Carrigan (1995). Mark Berger protests this tendency in his excellent review essay of the Zapatista literature: "even though the movement that has emerged represents a break with the cold war era, the Zapatistas clearly continue to operate in the shadow of the Marxism and guerrilla politics of that era and of the Mexican Revolution." (2001: 159).

IV. Scale, Place, And Transnational Advocacy Networks

☙ Part of the problem with debates about how to best understand and 'classify' *Zapatismo* involves the ubiquitous analytic tendency to reduce complex phenomena to a singular level of geographic scale. We see struggles as either global or local, a national crisis or a global contradiction. Questions of analytic and material scale, like the "global" and the "local", are frequently treated as static ontological entities, obscuring their fluid construction and alteration by technological developments, social struggles and class conflicts.[24] Yet much, if not most, social phenomena involve a complex intermingling of scales of struggle.[25] Smith argues that geographic scales should not be seen as a harmonious mosaic – as in the profoundly banal and depoliticizing slogan, 'think globally, act locally' – but as a nested hierarchy embedded in a global division of labour (1992: 73, 75). For example, the global tends to involve the "scale of financial capital"; the national usually constitutes units of political and military co-operation, and legislates questions of labour; the "locality" is the scale of "social reproduction and embodies the geographical territory over which daily activities normally range" (ibid.).

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[24] While a comprehensive examination of scale is not possible here, it should be noted that the term has two meanings which are related, but distinct: 1) material scale, as landscape; 2) analytic scale, which refers to the level of abstraction we use understand social relationships, regardless of their geographic nature (Smith 1992: 74).

[25] Given the dominance of the 'globalist adaptation' perspective, these biases occur in varying degrees. The focus is often on the global or the local, or the global/local nexus, while the national and state levels are relegated to the dustbin of history.

When we understand the interrelations of scale, it becomes less important to classify *Zapatismo* solidarity into a local/national/global classification scheme, or select a scale of struggle *a priori*. It seems more important to explore the ways these levels interact, which scales are most effective for certain struggles, and how the scales themselves change through technological innovation and resistance. For example, how are transnational Internet flows related to the struggles of *campesinos* in the southeast of Chiapas? How are these local struggles related to struggles over control of the state, both regionally and nationally? The limits of the global scale, in particular, are not always considered in discussions of the formation of global solidarity networks. While we might agree on a common protagonist (e.g. neo-liberalism, or transnational corporations), it is not clear how to resolve fundamental contradictions between the scales targeted in the course of these struggles. While this challenge is fraught with difficulties, it is an unavoidable part of building resistance to neo-liberal globalism. As Harvey writes:

> How to build a political movement at a variety of spatial scales as an answer to the geographical and geopolitical strategies of capital is a problem that in outline at least the [Communist] Manifesto clearly

> articulates. How to do it for our times is an imperative issue for us to resolve (2000: 52).

The challenge of scale – both analytically and politically – is to dialectically combine universality and particularity. This is no easy feat. For Raymond Williams, this challenge was so great he could only find reconciliation through the medium of fiction. To describe this challenge, Williams used the concept of "militant particularism", which requires that we are simultaneously aware of the "systemic qualities of the damage being wrought across geographical scales and difference", at the same time we are rooted in a specific politics of place (2000: 81). Yet cosmopolitan academic commentators tend to overlook the fact that most political attachments are rooted in particular times and places.[26] While capital possesses the ability to flow across vast dimensions of time and space, most people in the majority world are not only rooted in particular places, but lack access to technologies of space-time compression like the Internet, or even telephones.[27]

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[26] Robyn Eckersley provides an excellent summary of eco-anarchist and eco-communalist positions that directly pertain to a conceptualisation of appropriate struggle and attachment to place (1992: 145-78). For a criterion of 'place' that is global, but avoids insularity, see Massey (1991: 24-9).

[27] When individuals of the majority world are connected to technologies of time/space compression, like television, this often entails a relatively passive participation in unidirectional corporate media involving populations "who are simply on the receiving end of time-space-compression" (Massey 1991: 26).

The challenge of 'militant particularism' is to set aside abstract theorizing about global civil society, explore the difficulties of political organising across vast geographic expanses, while retaining awareness of the inevitable rootedness in a particular place. When we do this, we are reminded that constructing a truly *global* solidarity is a highly ambitious undertaking. A truly 'global' solidarity would involve multiple continents (rather than simply bilateral engagement across nations), alleviate inequities across them, create democratic structures enabling mass participation across multiple national boundaries (Shaw 1994: 654), and develop a global media with a diversity of views to stimulate common debates. Non-state actors from around the world would regularly interact (with both state and non-state actors), and share understandings of substantive issues.[28] Despite the homogenizing force of global capital (Barber 1995; Ritzer 2000), cultural diversities present obstacles to understanding and the construction of shared identities. Thus, while solidarity *beyond* national boundaries is not new (e.g. diaspora politics and pan-nationalisms), when the scale is broadened to this extent, it is unclear how global projects can effectively create alternative imagined communities of solidarity.[29]

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[28] Clark *et. al.* (1998) do not find substantial evidence of global civil society in their study of NGO participation in UN world conferences. While the number of NGOs is increasing, they are disproportionately from the North rather than being globally representative. When evaluating the existence of a shared global "society" of common frames, evidence of deepening common frames among NGOs was found, but there was less evidence that these frames were accepted by states, whose interpretation continued to dominate the various issue areas in international forums. The study concludes that state sovereignty continues to limit the development of a global civil society.

[29] Even national solidarity projects have traditionally had to face the difficult challenge of creating shared imagined communities of understanding across wide expanses of inequality and heterogeneity. See James (1996).

These challenges suggest the need to temper our usage of such ambitious terminology. Luckily, other concepts come to the fore. 'Transnational'[30] is a less ambitious concept, referring to organisations or movements operating across nations without necessarily subsuming the national. Keck and Sikkink usefully elaborate the differences between transnational social movements (TSMs) and transnational advocacy networks (TANs) (1998: 219). A TSM is built on a scale of concrete linkages deriving from ties such as shared locality, experiences, or kinship and possesses some capacity for mass mobilisation. Participants are connected more than episodically, and share a commitment to common action (Tarrow 1998: 184). TANs usually involve a smaller number of morally committed activists linked together in several nations to share "values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information" (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 46). The goal is not just to influence outcomes but to *change the terms of the debate*.

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[30] Unlike the editors of this volume, I employ the term "transnational" rather than "international" (or "supranational"). The prefix 'supra' implies a connection that subsumes national bodies and identities. In contrast, the prefix 'trans' suggests connections that cross and transform national boundaries, without necessarily erasing them. This is akin to the meaning of the term "transpersonal ecology", an approach which does not deny the existence of the individual ego, but attempts to seek out identification and connections beyond the self which then transform the narrow, egoistic limitations of the self (see Fox 1995 198-99). Transnational solidarity similarly aspires to create connections that establish shared meanings and connections beyond national identities, challenging both a chauvinistic nationalism, and a totalising universalism that erases national identities. Although the term international has been used in this sense, I avoid the term since it has been monopolized by international relations to refer to inter-state relations. This is an unfortunate monopolization, as it obscures important historical traditions of cross-national webs of socialist solidarity (The Marxist understanding of "international" referred to the inter-nation class solidarities amongst workers organisations, and to the First, Second and Third Internationals.) It is also unfortunate since in the dominant liberal usage, *international* means inter-statal, as if nations unproblematically coincide with existing states.

While TANs have historic roots in struggles against slavery and for universal suffrage, contemporary TANs like *Zapatismo* can be seen as a response to the ethico-political legitimacy deficits of neo-liberal globalist projects.

Such distinctions are important because they allow us to consider appropriate scales of resistance to neo-liberal globalism. TANs are only one form of resistance and operate at only one scale of resistance. They should not be seen as a substitute for social movements based on daily interaction, shared locality, and mass mobilization. TANs are critical actors whose intervention should be evaluated in relation to struggles that they are in solidarity with – particularly struggles of a local scale that rely on close personal contact, and battle over specific places and resources, like those in the Lacandón jungle of Eastern Chiapas.

V. Exploiting Ethico-Political Legitimacy Deficits And Working Across Scales: Strengths and weaknesses of the Zapatismo *TAN*

☙ Transnational social movements are often depicted as an ultimate form of social organization. In debates about the role of the Internet in *Zapatismo*, for example, it has been argued that Internet organizing is inferior because contact between activists is episodic, and heavily reliant on discursive, non-experiential information sources. Judith Adler Hellman, for example, argues that that electronic communication provides a "remarkably 'flattened' picture of the actors and events in Chiapas" (2000). This technological activism "constitutes a kind of "'virtual' Chiapas that is instantly available to us on a computer screen, but which bears only a very partial resemblance to the "real" Chiapas".[31] Tarrow cautions: "anyone who has caught the internet virus can attest, virtual activism may serve as a *substitute* – and not as a spur – to activism in the real world" (1998: 193).

These concerns raise important issues of standpoint and speaking position. However, the distinction drawn between 'real' activism and 'virtual' Internet activism is based on a misunderstanding of multi-scaled strategizing. All activism is mediated by culturally specific mind-sets as well as by various mediums of information. Recognizing this does not disparage the critical role of personal experience in the development of a grounded political consciousness.[32] However, the inevitability of mediated social activism – temporally, spatially, and epistemologically – means that scales of activism other than direct, person-to person experience are an unavoidable dimension of global solidarity projects. The *Zapatismo* TAN represents one scale of struggle—one that capitalizes on new opportunities to exchange information. Internet related activities of TANs are not a distraction from 'real' mobilisation, but an invaluable tool that uses networks to quickly transmit information on military repression, human rights violations, and state subordination of citizens' interests to transnational capital.

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[31] A review and critique of Judith Adler Hellman's "Real and Virtual Chiapas" written by Harry Cleaver can be found (http://www.eco.utexas.edu/Homepages/Faculty/Cleaver/anti-hellman.html.). A critique by Josh Paulson, and a rebuttal by Hellman, can be found in *Socialist Register 2001* (http://www.yorku.ca/socreg/).

[32] As Paulo Freire writes, "[s]olidarity requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is in solidarity; it is a radical posture." (1995: 31).

One particularly clear example of this is found in the solidarity actions surrounding human rights violations in Mexico. The *Zapatismo* solidarity network has helped expose the Mexican state's politics of supremacy and subordination, juxtaposing it against an incipient transnational value system of human rights. One of the most important cases involved the now infamous leaked memo from Riordan Roett to Chase Manhattan Bank's Emerging Markets division. This memo was widely distributed through *Zapatismo* listservs and websites, was used by protestors around the world, and is thought to have been a key part of the decision to halt the military offensive in Chiapas. In the memo Roett, on leave as Director of John Hopkins University's Latin American Studies program, advised the Mexican government of the "need to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and of security policy," thereby publicizing in a very explicit way the politics of supremacy and subordination accompanying neoliberalism (Roett 1995).[33] Through ongoing human rights witnessing programs in Chiapas, the solidarity movement continues to publicize the importance of the sort of autonomous self-development embodied in the San Andrés Accords, and to highlight how and where the current situation is incongruent with international human rights. The Chiapas Community Defenders Network (*La Red de Defensores*), for example, has filed three cases with the

International Labor Organization (ILO) to demand that the Mexican Government comply with Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (obligating states to implement indigenous rights to land and self-determination) and ratify the original COCOPA version of the San Andrés Accords. This campaign has been publicized through Global Exchange Internet networks, and offers email readers information about the San Andrés Accords, and a way to fax President Fox to demand implementation of ILO Convention 169 (Lewis 2001b).

The ILO petition illustrates the multi-scalar nature of resistance to neoliberalism. The petition involved lobbying at the transnational level for transnational values requiring implementation by federal states to allow more local forms of self-determination. Struggles against neo-liberalism cannot exist purely at the transnational or local level. Transnational Internet information flows are part of a multi-scaled resistance strategy to neo-liberal globalism – not a substitute for face-to-face social movement connections, or projects of mass mobilization. Use of the Internet does not necessarily indicate a political insincerity, but demonstrates the critical role of a particular scale of struggle under globalization: information exchange through transnational advocacy networks.[34]

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[33] For a list of the many electronic messages and political implications of this memo, see the Chiapas95 archive at http://burn.ucsd.edu/.archives/chiapas-l/1995.11/msg00080.html

[34] Mary-Anne Tenuto of the Chiapas Support Committee writes: "I agree that the Internet is a cheap and efficient way of disseminating information around the country and around the world. It is best used as a communications tool to reach many people quickly. I would agree that it should not be used to REPLACE local organizing, but to ENHANCE it." M.A. Tenuto, Interview with author, October 13, 2000.

While transnational advocacy networks are not themselves social movements, they can lay the groundwork for mass-based, transnational social movements characterized by a common frame, and shared identities sustained over time. But the transition from network to movement must be treated as an *open question*, not an automatic evolution. It should not be assumed that social movements operate most effectively or efficiently at the scale of the transnational. National-level movements may retain importance for logistical and institutional reasons, as the Zapatistas themselves suggest in their ability to articulate themselves as legitimate actors in national publics.[35] Even though a *Zapatismo* social movement within Mexico has been strengthened by information exchange through transnational activist networks, state targets remain important. Mexican activists draw on support from transnational *Zapatismo* networks, but organise mass mobilisation primarily at the national level, and against targets such as the Mexican Congress, the presidential office, and the Mexican military. National-level mass mobilisation has been evident since 1994, when tens of thousands of Mexicans first filled the *zócalo* in Mexico City to denounce the military's efforts to eliminate the peasant army.

Sustained mass mobilization at the national level satisfies one criterion for a social movement. However, we cannot assume that a *transnational* social movement will inevitably follow. Although there have been public demonstrations supporting the Zapatistas outside Mexico, these are relatively minor events compared to the large-scale mass-mobilisations held within Mexican borders.[36] The other marker of a transnational social movement – a common master-frame amongst transnational participants – is only present to a limited degree. Moreover, there are important material inequalities across scales within the *Zapatismo* network – a factor that constitutes the greatest weakness of the *Zapatismo* TAN. In the heady enthusiasm for an emerging 'global consciousness', it is often forgotten that globalization also creates a 'fourth world' of marginalized, structurally irrelevant populations (Hoogvelt 1997:129; Castells 1998).

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[35] This national articulation classifies the Zapatistas as a bona fide social movement according to Charles Tilly's definition: "social movements effectively establish the presence of an important entity – and identity- in national politics. They assert the existence of a worthy, unified, numerous, committed, and aggrieved claimant." (1999: 262).

While activities of *Zapatismo* have been remarkably successful exploiting ethico-political legitimacy deficits of the politics of supremacy and subordination, the dilemmas of trying to construct multi-scaled solidarity politics remain a challenge. The Zapatista TAN is particularly challenged by uneven geographic development and inter-network inequality. This complicates the construction of both a transnational master-frame to unify the struggle against neo-liberal globalism, and institutional and material alternatives to the neo-liberal historic bloc. This caveat is not meant to discredit TAN activities, but only to realistically evaluate their limits. Considerations of scale and inequality allow us to establish priorities for solidarity work, understand the limits of single-scale campaigns accessible only to elite actors, and identify broader issues in the 'fourth world war' such as debt loads, and human rights to livelihood and food security.[37]

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[36] While there is a social movement dimension to Mexican *Zapatismo*, it should not be forgotten that the origin of this movement lies within the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) – an army complete with guns, bullets and a combat history. The use of violent tactics is often occluded in the rush to employ social movement terminology, and obscures the intimate relationship between violence and neo-liberal globalism. See Johnston (2000). In the EZLNs own words: "[the EZLN] is organized as an army, and it fulfills all international regulations for recognition as an army. When the war began, the EZLN fulfilled international conventions: it formally declared war, it has recognizable uniforms, ranks and insignias, it respects the civil population and neutral bodies. The

While the term transnational is more specific than 'global', it may also obfuscate inequalities within *Zapatismo* networks between relatively privileged participants with easy access to electronic information networks, and the Chiapaneco struggles where participants are primarily indigenous and generally don't have access to computers.[38] The lives of elite participants in transnational advocacy networks contrast sharply with the drama of *campesino* survival in the militarised region of Chiapas, in addition to the less publicized militarisation occurring in the states of Guerro and Oaxaca. This was dramatically evident on a trip to the Zapatista capital, La Realidad, with a solidarity group of U.S. citizens. While a member of

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EZLN has weapons, military organization and discipline." (Zapatista Army of National Liberation 2001).

[37] At the time of this writing, the tensions between global inequity and solidarity efforts were dramatically manifest in the varying efforts to raise money for the victims of the September 11th terrorist attacks in New York, and the bombing of Afghanistan. While more than $1 billion was collected for the families of those who died in the terrorist attacks, the UN received only $147 million in donations – far short of the $654 it is estimated to need to help the 7.5 million Afghans in danger of starving to death. *Globe & Mail*. 10/23/01. A1.

[38] One notable exception to this is the Chiapas Media project, which provides computers and video recorders to indigenous communities to give voice to their struggle. See http://www.chiapasmediaproject.org/.

the solidarity group complained loudly of high tuition fees at her California university, several *campesinos* questioned the visiting gringos about work opportunities in the U.S., and the average hourly wage for illegal migrants. Many elements of solidarity – visiting the region, standing together with local citizens facing danger, transferring resources to isolated communities – are voluntary, and are undertaken only by the most committed activists. Voluntarism is typical of social movements, but in the case of extreme power differentials amongst participants, it works to limit the construction of a solidarity based on equality, and often blinds participants to the lack of choices and mobility afforded to the recipients of their solidarity. Dan La Botz points out that

> Since indigenous peoples, poor people, and working class peoples usually have few economic resources, they find it hard to maintain written, telephonic, electronic, and other forms of communication, they cannot afford to travel, and they do not have the economic resources to take time to work on solidarity issues. *This imposes a special burden on organisations in wealthier countries to share resources with them* (interview with author, October 23, 2000; my emphasis).

Sensitivity to scale requires recognition of not just difference, but *inequality* within a transnational *Zapatismo* network – inequality that makes it extremely difficult for indigenous *campesinos* in Eastern Chiapas to independently articulate themselves within information networks dominated by computer-literate elites. Network inequality and heterogeneous life worlds both hinder the formation of a shared transnational master-frame. To build transnational solidarity a common frame must be shaped from the bottom up, but this is difficult when ideas and outlooks fail to transcend a multiplicity of local boundaries. While theorists may assume that globalization makes increased cross-cultural communication inevitable, network participants continue to be divided by cultural barriers, linguistic gaps, tactical differences, and radically different lifeworlds.[39] Press releases from Zapatista communities regarding local events (e.g. murders of rival community members, tales of sick animals) are not easily interpreted by solidarity activists outside, or even inside Mexico.[40] When the EZLN was silent for much of 2000, John Ross (2000b) wrote of underlying divisions within Zapatista communities:

> [I]f the [EZLN] comandantes are resolved to keep their silences, the Zapatista autonomous communities in the jungle and the highlands continue to churn out a steady stream of "denuncias" (complaints) against local PRI authorities, the military, and even one-time allies in what the EZLN calls its "war against oblivion" ... The *denuncias* from the grass roots, while laced with anger and revolutionary resonance, are very local in scope and lack the acute analysis and world vision of the communiques with which Subcomandante Marcos galvanized the nation for years.

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[39] Despite the EZLN's explicit military aspirations, some supporters, such as Jorge Aros from Witness for Peace, explicitly disagree with these tactics: "While I personally support Emiliano Zapata's ideals of land reform and indigenous rights, I do not personally support the violence used by the EZLN to bring them to prominence. I view such actions as fomenting the kinds of response visited upon the 45 innocents of Acteal." (J. Aros, Interview with author, October 12, 2000.)

[40] For example, see Community of Union Progreso (2000).

The romanticization of the 'Other' that tends to accompany post-colonial solidarity projects is a further obstacle to the development a common transnational master-frame.[41] As Yi-Fu Tuan cautions, the grace of non-Western communities is often exaggerated to alleviate Western guilt about the uncertain moral codes of capitalist modernity (1989: 168). In the case of Zapatismo, "cultural and linguistic differences limit work and mutual understanding" and there remains a "tendency to romanticize communities" and minimise internal divisions – such as expelling women who conceive out of wedlock (W. Rheberg, Interview with author, October 13, 2000). Romantacization of the local South not only obscures the ubiquitous potential for parochial insularity and conservative reactionism, but equates a common logic of global capitalist expansion with an identical situation of exploitation. Peter Waterman's vivid evocation of this problem is worth quoting at length:

> [P]roblems remain, particularly for solidarity on the North-South axis and direction. The Western left, which would be cautious, sceptical or downright suspicious of any would-be icon in the North, still seems to need its iconic figures, transformatory (and transformed) movements, its promised (is)lands and highlands. And then to find them in faraway places with strange-sounding names. And to endow them with the purity, simplicity, unity, purpose and capacity that the metropolitan left feels

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[41] While Harry Cleaver minimises the problem, Judith Adler Hellman implies it is specially connected to *Zapatismo*, and not indicative of a broader, and more long-standing problem that troubles transnational solidarity generally.

> itself to lack. . . But idolatry is clearly an invitation to iconoclasm. And gods to be worshipped inevitably turn into Gods that Failed (2001).

Herein lies the real problem of creating a "virtual Chiapas" – a place where elite actors fail to recognize inequality and their privileged political-economic positioning in global hierarchies. This virtual Chiapas involves the construction of an exotic Other to underpin Orientalist constructions of elite benevolence, and may serve to substitute small acts of kindness for more radical redistribution projects. This is not simply an epistemological dilemma (how to know the 'real Chiapas'), but a thorny material problematic haunting all transnational solidarity projects: how do we build a solidarity based on a dialogical project of cultural exchange *and* broad-based material redistribution and reorganization? As Massey points out, it is virtually impossible for even the best-intentioned activist to stand outside these unequal systems of exchange:

> [T]he 'time-space-compression' which is involved in producing and reproducing the daily lives of the comfortably-off in First World societies – not just their own travel but the resources they draw on, from all over the world, to feed their lives – may entail environmental consequences, or hit constraints, which will limit the lives of others before their own (1991: 26).

Although the world economy links people to distant others through global commodity chains, these relations across scales are embedded in hierarchies of class, gender and race. Not only is space-time differentially distributed, but the unequal distribution of mobility is interconnected:

> It is not simply a question of unequal distribution, that some people move more than others. . . *It is that the mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people*. . . We need to ask, in other words, whether our relative mobility and power over mobility and communication entrenches the spatial imprisonment of other groups (Massey 1991: 26, *my emphasis*).

In short, the cosmopolitan ideal of a global civil society as a level playing field where mobile global citizens are free to enter, exchange ideas, and form solidarities is a naïve fantasy that obscures important obstacles to building solidarities across geographic scales.

Recognizing the difficult challenges of inequality, heterogeneity, and romantacization in the construction of transnational solidarity networks is not to deny the existence of transnational solidarity. Despite the logistical problems of transnational mass mobilisation, ideas readily flow across borders. The Zapatista uprising inspired activists around the world to analyse neo-liberalism at home, brought three thousand activists from forty-five countries to Chiapas to plan a more 'just humanity', spawned a series of international encounters on the same theme,[42] and inspired anti-globalism activists in Seattle, Prague, and Québec City

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[42] The Acción Zapatista website has an entire section on the *encuentros*. "http://www.utexas.edu/students/nave/.

(Blackened Flag 2001). The Zapatistas have inadvertently generated a loosely knit, grass-roots philosophy and solidarity network that is connected by shared normative concerns, and effectively exploits the ethico-political legitimacy deficits of neo-liberal globalism. Part of how they did this was by naming neoliberalism as a common enemy, creating a unity encapsulated in the phrase, 'we are all Marcos.' Yet however impressive its successes, a comprehensive transnational master-frame, let alone a TSM, or a set of institutional and material alternatives to globalism, has not yet gelled around this resistance program, and serious obstacles remain in the struggle for solidarity across different scales of struggle.

VI. Conclusion: scales of struggle in the fourth world war

> And what you in France at *Le Monde diplomatique* describe as *pensée unique* (unchallengeable received wisdom associated with neoliberalism) supplies the ideological glue needed to convince the world that globalization is irreversible and that any other project would be utopian, unrealistic. At the world level, the big battle now taking place – which we could call the fourth world war – has its own line-up of forces. On one side, the supporters of the global economy and, on the other, everyone who, in one way or another, is resisting it.
>
> -Subcomandante Marcos
> (Ramonet 2001: 9)

☙ Seen through dialectical eyeglasses, we appear to be in the midst of a wave of counter-hegemonic efforts against the deepening of market relations in late capitalism. As states fail to provide public goods demanded by citizens, ethico-political legitimacy crises follow and citizens struggle to re-embed markets within democratically organised political systems that respect ecological limits. The Zapatista rebellion in 1994 provided a powerful focal point for these trends, and their rebellion blossomed into the creation of vibrant solidarity networks that brought diverse activists together across multiple national boundaries. In a very general way, resistance to the expansion of the corporate market forces of globalism was united under a common banner: ‘we are all Marcos’. Yet it is not enough for materially privileged activists to proclaim that ‘we are all Marcos’, without looking deeply in the mirror and determining how they (we) are *not* Marcos. Despite the presence of Subcomandante Marcos t-shirts at demonstrations, barriers of wealth, class, and cultural heterogeneity continue to divide forces of ‘bottom-up globalization’, and their targets remain formidable. Power and wealth are more highly concentrated than ever before in human history. The basic needs of a huge percentage of the world’s population go unmet, and the "four horseman of the apocalypse stalk the earth in the form of war, violence, disease and epidemics (such as AIDS), and famine." (Gill 1995b: 74)

With the emergence of a fourth world of structurally irrelevant populations, top-down modernization discourses are being replaced with ‘bottom-up’ development narratives focussed on heterogeneous ways of life in multiple ‘localities.’ This shift from universalist preoccupations to cultural pluralism is a necessary corrective. However, cultural pluralist accounts are often accompanied by a stubbornly apolitical discourse that eschews analysis of global capitalist exploitation and focuses, instead, on micro-managing crisis situations (Hoogvelt 1997: 178-80). We must investigate localist micro-development discourses that serve to bolster an "emerging system of global governance with methods and instruments geared to containing and managing symptoms rather than removing causes" (Hoogvelt 1997: 181) At the same time we must beware of un-reflective universals and Euro-centric growth models.

As always, the difficult but critical work lies in the middle ground. Drawing on the work of critical geographers like Neil Smith and David Harvey, I have referred to this as a *politics of scale* that dialectically combines universality and particularity, does not assume that one scale or resistance is sufficient, and roots out contradictions between different scales in the international division of labour and resources. Ethico-political challenges are necessary, but material and institutional ones are needed as well to upset hegemonic relations. We must be alert to the political-economic connections that privilege certain terrains and scales of struggles over others, and link seemingly unconnected local scales through commodity chains and information flows. This requires the activists root themselves in local struggles, while simultaneously evaluating their own positioning in global flows of capital and information.

The aim of this discussion of the politics of scale is intended to discourage unreflective assumptions about global civil society and universal ideals, and encourage further investigation into the logistic scalar limits of transnational solidarity. While a small number of peripatetic activists attend anti-globalization protests in multiple national contexts, for most people in the majority world, such mobility is impossible. An exclusive focus on this scale of activism draws critical resources away from other scales of struggle rooted in particular places, against specific governments, and over particular resources like land, food, and water. My intention is also to discourage the assumption, linked to modern intellectual traditions of universalism, that a transnational master-frame extends from indigenous *campesinos* in Chiapas to solidarity activists in the minority world. This is not to discount all possibilities for a unifying frame centred around criticism of transnational corporate rule. Standards of universal human rights have been effectively used to deride social exclusion, and are part of an emerging transnational master-frame inspired in part by the Zapatistas' critique of neoliberalism. But power and material imbalances make it possible for certain network actors to dominate the construction of transnational master-frames, and then make unreflective assumptions about their universality. We must find a way of strategically employing universals to unite diverse resistance movements, as we simultaneously pay attention to what divides us.

Chapter 7

CONSUMERISM

This chapter explores the possibilities for constructing a new aesthetic common sense that resists the ecological and human colonialism of capitalist consumerism. Here "aesthetics" are not interpreted narrowly as art, but are seen as part of a vital tradition of critical thought that laments the "inorganic, mechanistic nature of industrial capitalism", and "draws sustenance from this prophetic denunciation" (Eagleton 1990, 118, 3). It is through an aesthetic re-enchantment with the world that Santos identifies possibilities for a paradigmatic shift towards a new aesthetic common sense – a common sense that displaces the privileged position of instrumental rationality, and reunites the useful and the beautiful (1995, 52-53).

The possibilities of such a shift will be examined through the case of fair trade. This case exemplifies the strengths and challenges of attempting to move from a "free trade" regulated by instrumental rationality and marketization, toward a "fair-trade" governed by democratic principles of equality, participation, and social justice. The 'shopping for social justice' strategy walks a difficult line. While it must create a new political common sense that politicises the unsustainable habits of core consumers, it must also address the need for an aesthetic re-enchantment with consumer culture. For fair trade to be economically viable, it must appeal to the senses, to hegemonic aesthetic sensibilities, and move beyond a modern critique of oppression, or a solidarity based on guilt. Goods must be sexy, seductive, and desirable. At the same time, they must embody the norms of a new common sense based on an ethical responsibility towards other generations, distant populations, and the natural world. Like aesthetics itself, fair-trade is an imperfect, impartial and "eminently contradictory phenomenon" (Eagleton 1990, 3). While complicit with multiple elements of capitalist ideology, fair-trade bravely confronts the corporate dominated realm of consumer culture – a realm that is deeply embedded in the everyday lives of core citizens, yet may serve as a starting point for politicisation. Consumer strategies are rife with contradictions, but they may serve as useful starting points for redefining notions of the good life *based on a rejection of instrumental reason, and a project of aesthetic solidarity that strives to undermine oppressive relationships with the Other.*

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CONSTRUCTING A SOLIDARITY OF CONSUMPTION: from free trade to fair trade

> Drinking a cup of justice . . . And Justice can taste outstanding.
>
> -Advertisement for fairly traded gourmet coffee

☙ A growing number of consumer products in core regions of the global economy are designed and marketed to placate the conscience of the uncomfortable consumer. Everything from ethical mutual funds, to coffee beans, to Nike's "no harm clothing", are presented as part of 'alternative' consumption practices that minimise the exploitation of a globalised economy, and promote principles of "fair trade".[1] Socially responsible trade comprises only a minority of the trade in third world handicrafts and agricultural products, but fair-trade advocates are struggling to expand this market niche.[2] Following the wave of

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[1] I first became aware of the "No HARM CLOTHING" slogan on a trip to Los Angeles (07/99), where it was used to promote the Beverley Hills *Nike World* super-store. When I visited the store, the fine print beneath the "No-Harm" clothing seemed to indicate only that the clothing would not harm the person wearing it. This suggests that the slogan is part of a general marketing objective to dispel the bad press associated with Indonesian sweatshops, and create a more positive 'fair-trade' corporate image.

[2] Socially responsible trade accounts for approximately one-hundredth of one percent of the $20 trillion sales garnered by the estimated 80 million to 100 million enterprises world-wide. Thomson, B. (1999). 'Fair Trade -- Frequently Asked Questions -- FAQ'.

'environmentally-friendly' products, some fair-trade advocates predict a trend towards greater consumer demand for products produced under fair conditions.

Is fair-trade simply a marketing coup that has captured a conscientious yuppy consumer niche? One Canadian writer described the growth of "Third World chic" and alternative trade organisations (ATOs) with utter resignation: "Maybe it's true that the best the world's poor can hope for is better pimps for their products" (Robins 1994, p. 24). But is the prostitution metaphor appropriate? It is not clear that we can afford to be so dismissive — especially in an age where neo-liberal globalisation remains hegemonic, consumerism prevails as a dominant source of identities, and lifestyle politics stands out as the most prevalent contemporary form of North American resistance.[3] The fair trade proponents

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October 1998, Internet. . Fair TradeMark Canada. http://www.web.net/fairtrade/who/fair2.html.. Although 30% of consumers say they will pay extra to ensure that the product was produced under fair conditions, market research suggests that only 5% will actually do so, and only with assurance that certain quality and convenience conditions are met (*ibid*). More optimistic perspectives point out that US Fair trade stores annually earned more than $20 million in sales, with some stores reporting 40% yearly growth FTF (1999a). 'Fair Trade Resolution PASSED!!!!'. May 29, 1999, Internet. . Fair Trade Federation (FTF). http://www.fairtradefederation.com/ftres.html.; world-wide, the fair trade movement is responsible for $200 million in sales Thomson, B. (1999). 'Fair Trade -- Frequently Asked Questions -- FAQ'. October 1998, Internet. . Fair TradeMark Canada. http://www.web.net/fairtrade/who/fair2.html.. North American fair-traders frequently cite the success of fair-trade products in Europe, where there are over 130 brands of fair trade coffee available in 35,000 supermarkets; some of this coffee being is served in the European parliament, national and state legislatures, and corporate cafeterias TransFair (1999c). 'Fair Trade Coffee: A History of Success and a Bright Future'. June 24/99, Internet. . TransFair USA. http://www.transfairusa.org/why/coffee.html.

[3] In his overview of the different variants of green discourse, Dryzek notes that the lifestyle greens have had by far the greatest impact transforming the collective consciousness Dryzek, J. S. (1997). *The Politics of the Earth. Environmental Discourses*. (New York: Oxford University Press). While scores of people have come to demand green products, "[w]hat people have not done, except in very small numbers, is adopt any

claim to provide "one of the best alternative models for economically just and sustainable development" (FTF 1999a).

I. Research objectives and methodology

☙ This chapter attempts to move beyond totalizing cynicism, as well as unbridled optimism towards fair trade as a development strategy. I explore the contradictions and paradoxes of designing consumer practices to build bridges of socio-economic solidarity across core and periphery. A critical but sympathetic viewpoint is essential, especially since many fair-trade projects are well intentioned, and there is evidence to suggest that certain peripheral groups benefit from these connections.[4]

More specifically, my goal is to examine North American discourse surrounding fair trade products, looking closely and critically to see what is both revealed and

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kind of ecological consciousness of the kind sought by deep ecologists, ecofeminists, eco-communalists, and eco-theologians" (*ibid*).

[4] Because of the heterogeneity of groups involved in fair trade, and the absence of any common measurable criteria, it is difficult to find a standard measure recording the relative benefits to Southern producers Thomson, B. (1999). 'Fair Trade -- Frequently Asked Questions -- FAQ'. October 1998, Internet. . Fair TradeMark Canada. http://www.web.net/fairtrade/who/fair2.html.. Some evidence does suggest that producer groups benefit from these connections, especially in the trade of fair-trade organic coffee TransFair (1999e). 'TransFair USA: Who benefits from fair trade?'. June 24, 1999, Internet. . TransFair USA. http://www.transfairusa.org/why/benefits.html. Wilshaw, R. (1994). 'Invisible Threads. Oxfam's Bridge Programme'. *Focus on Gender*, 2, 23-28., and especially since some North-South trade may be necessary to give Third World communities access to necessary technology Brown, M. B. (1993). *Fair Trade. Reform and Realities in the International Trading System*. (London: Zed Books). It is not my objective to discuss the macro potential of fair trade linkages, nor to provide data on the relative costs and benefits to the producers involved in trade networks. While these questions are important, my research stems from an interest in examining the ideological

concealed. A discursive focus allows us to evaluate the potential of fair trade to undermine hegemonic consumer ideologies – ideologies which act as the "fuel that powers the motor of global capitalism" (Sklair 1991, p. 42). As recent philosophical trends have emphasised, language plays a critical role in our understanding of the social world. The particular construction and analysis of globalisation has key consequences for popular understandings and agency around social problems. As Dryzek neatly summarises, "[d]iscourses enable stories to be told" (1997, p. 16). To draw out some of the contradictions of attempting to work towards greater global justice through the practice of fair trade, I approached the material with several questions: What broader social discourses does the fair trade literature fit into? What do these discourses reveal, and conceal about structural inequality on a global scale? Does the fair trade discourse expand awareness of over-consumption in the industrialised core regions, or shed light on the ideological battles between consumerism versus citizenship?

My objective was not to carry out a microanalysis of specific textual forms, but to use discourse analysis to examine predominant themes in the fair-trade discourse at a more general level.[5] More specifically, I wanted to determine how fair-trade

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implications of fair-trade discourse, particularly in North America where consumerism is intimately related to a host of ecological, political and development problems.

[5] Data was collected using participant observation (e.g. visits to 'Third World' craft stores, participation in fair trade seminars), and through the collection of textual sources (e.g. store newsletters, fair-trade brochures) in print and electronic form. A more focussed discourse analysis was conducted using the textual material of several of the largest participants in the North American fair-trade market, with a particular focus on

discourse constructed understandings of development, consumerism, and global justice. Although these positions are certainly not 'injected' into some sort of collective psyche, certain discourses tend to make some interpretations more likely than others. While it is critical to acknowledge the variations in audience reception, it is also important to recognise that economically and politically powerful social actors are better equipped to normalise their particular 'facts' and interpretations. This research charts a theoretical middle ground between a deterministic position (where the audience is seen as passive cultural dupes), and a playful anarchy (where the audience has perfect information and an exaggerated free will).[6]

Before discussing the results of my analysis of fair-trade discourses, I will summarise two key background pieces: the context of "consumer sovereignty" in

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Bridgehead (see Appendix A). *Bridgehead* is an ATO formed in 1981 to distribute fairly-trade coffee. *Bridgehead* is currently affiliated with Oxfam-Canada. It has expanded its product range far beyond coffee, and has three retail stores in Canada, as well as a mail-order catalogue serving customers across North America and a wholesale food division. The research also draws from textual material collected from numerous other ATOs and certification agencies: *10,000 villages* (one of the original ATOs run by the Mennonite Central Committee since 1946), the *Fair Trade Federation* (FTF) (the largest association of fair-trade organisations), *TransFair USA* (a non-profit monitoring group certifying fair trade guidelines), and the *International Federation for Alternative Trade* (IFAT) (a federation of 60 ATOS and producer groups).

[6] Various theoretical approaches can be classified within this "middle-ground" but limited space prohibits a thorough exploration of these issues. What I would emphasise here is that theories of social and cultural reproduction are not limited to the totalizing functionalist structuralism of Althusserian Marxism; theories have been elaborated in more fallibilistic, historically specific directions which use structural methods, but are fully aware of the importance of human agency. Corrigan, P., & Sayer, D. (1985). *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution.* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell). Morrow, R., & Torres, C. (1995). *Social Theory and Education: A critique of theories of social and cultural reproduction.* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press).

the West, and the difficulties of achieving justice in an age of neo-liberal globalism.

II. The Background: consumerism and globalisation

i. The context of consumerism and over-consumption

☙ Efforts to promote global justice through alternative consumer practices have not evolved in a vacuum. The fair-trade sector is a small fish floating in a big ocean where consumerism[7] and corporate power reign supreme. For those interested in promoting a vital, democratic public sphere engaged in critical discussion over social and ecological concerns, the symptoms of consumerism in North America are discouraging. Relatively wealthy people feel deprived.[8] There is an ever-expanding criterion for consumer "necessities", diminished support for public goods and the taxation system, and a relatively low level of criticism of consumerism as a way of life.[9] While environmentalist doomsayers warn of impending ecological catastrophes, the hegemonic indicators of the good

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Thompson, J. B. (1995). *The Media and Modernity: A social theory of the media.* (California: Stanford University Press).

[7] The term "consumerism" is used to refer to a way of life focussed on the possession and use of consumer goods Kellner, D. (1983). 'Critical theory, commodities and consumer society'. *Theory Culture and Society*, 1, 64-84.

[8] Two-thirds of people in the $75,000+ income bracket in the U.S. stated that they would need an increase of 50-100% of their income to be satisfied Schor, J. B. (1998). *The Overspent American.* (USA: Basic Books).

[9] Schor's research found that most Americans are in a state of psychological denial about their high-end spending preferences Schor, J. B. (1998). *The Overspent American.* (USA: Basic Books).

life still tend to prioritise consumer goods over happy families or meaningful work (Schor 1998, p. 14-17). While income inequality grew in the 1980s and 1990s, consumer aspirations for both poor and rich expanded. Virtually everybody wanted more stuff.[10]

Some may object that consumerism is a more diverse, pleasurable phenomena than I am presenting.[11] Clearly opposition to consumerism exists at the level of ideology,[12] as well as practice. I would happily concede that there is personal pleasure and even a sense of empowerment in buying new things. I do not deny that products are used in 'transgressive' ways not intended by their producers. But what the post-modern pleasure camp often forgets is the social function of consumer-leisure activities in late capitalism, as well as the relative inefficacy of these consumer actions against corporate-dominated production systems. While recognising microspheres of power within consumer culture is clearly important, this should not blind us to broader patterns of powerlessness and exploitation

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[10] One important, if numerically minor exception to the spectre of hegemonic consumerism in North America is the move towards "downshifting", or "voluntary simplicity", where work time and consumption are deliberately reduced in order to increase quality of life.

[11] Optimistic perspectives see consumerism as an "active, committed production of self and society which does not assimilate individuals to styles, but instead appropriates codes and fashions which are made into one's own", in the process, undermining hegemonic systems Shields, R. (1992). 'Lifestyle Shopping: The subject of consumption', . London. Routledge. . This sounds promising on the level of individual rebellion, but is much less dramatic on the level of collective political action.

[12] One of the most promising cases of resistance to the ideology of consumerism can be found in the "culture jammers" campaigns (e.g., Buy Nothing Day) and publications produced by Vancouver-based *Adbusters* Adbusters (1999). 'Adbusters: Campaigns', Internet. Adbusters. http://www.adbusters/org/campaigns/index.html.

(Gabriel and Lang 1995, p. 8; Langman 1992, p. 60, 63). Another important caveat to a critique of consumerism's ideological power is an awareness that consumerism' power is not purely ideological, but is inextricably linked to the disciplinary power of social practices. Developing alternative consumer practices requires space, time, and energy[13] that is not always possessed by consumers in the overworked, economically insecure social classes. For this reason, one of the most important forces contesting consumerism at the present moment are organisations advocating a move towards a shorter work week.[14]

Consumer ideologies tend to produce fragmented, differentiated identities that are highly amenable to corporate sponsorship, and which are often complacent about the distribution of power and resources under global capitalism (Hennessy 1993; Mort 1989; Stevenson 1995, p. 110, 112). In consumer societies resistance is often reduced to purchasing certain products. Not only is the political efficacy of these types of gestures questionable, but its intention has often been pre-empted by deliberate marketing efforts. As Thomas Frank outlines in *The Conquest of Cool*, the rebellion against conformity was effectively incorporated into Madison Avenue advertising strategies in the 1960s, and remains the dominant "cultural mode of the corporate moment" (Frank 1997, p. 4; Schor 1998). This is a rebellion accomplished through lifestyle rather than politics; the counter-cultural lifestyle subverts the status quo through pleasure rather than power (Frank 1997, p. 15). Mass culture is not a monolith; to be popular, it must be heterogeneous, incorporate the carnivalesque, invert values, and appeal to the frustration of living in mass industrialised society (Frank 1997, p. 18).

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[13] Not including time spent sleeping and working, watching television is the leading activity in consumer societies from Singapore to the United States Durning, A. T. (1992). *How Much is Enough? The Consumer Society and the Future of the Earth*. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company).

[14] Although the movement for a shorter work week is less developed in North America than it is in Europe, this movement does exist. See for example, the excellent work done by *32 Hours: Action for Full Employment and the Shorter Work Time Network of Canada* (238 Queen Street West, Lower Level Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 1Z7 / freetime@web.net).

In consumer societies the dominant modus operandi of identity construction is that of identity as a saleable commodity, or lifestyle, that we shape through our choices as a sovereign consumer. The consumer sovereignty ideal endorses the germinal utilitarian principle underlying market theory: that the pursuit of individual self-interest leads to a greater common good. Each individual, rational consumer looking out for their own interest is not a drain on common resources, but a powerful source of collective good. Under the ideal of consumer sovereignty, when we are poor, it is our *choice* to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. If our conscience is troubled by our wealth relative to the world's poor, individuals have a *choice* to buy fairly traded products. Consumer sovereignty has the appearance of being self-evident, even natural. There are strong popular and emotional attachments to its associated practices, since it is one of the few arenas of choice in modern life (Slater 1997, p. 27). Because the pursuit of individual self-interest is assumed to produce superior collective results, the consumer sovereignty ideal valorises individual choice over collective action to combat social problems.

ii. Over-consumption and ecological footprints

☙ So while people strive to express their individuality through 'sovereign' decisions over certain products, the whole premise of consumerism as a soul-wrenching, ecologically devastating way of life is not rigorously questioned in the dominant public sphere. Wackernagel and Rees write, "there is little evidence that many of "the public" understand the nature of global ecological change or appreciate the potential consequences of failing to respond. . . most people are concerned about environmental problems, but few understand or accept the full implications of making the shift to a more sustainable society" (Wackernagel and Rees 1996, p. 150). Counter-cultural consumption has come to mean consuming *differently*, *more specifically* — not consuming *less*. This has serious implications in the context of globalisation. First there is the question of whether tinkering with individual buying habits and corporate standards is a radical enough strategy to address global social and ecological problems. Paul Hawken writes: "If every company on the planet were to adopt the environmental and social practices of the best companies – of say, the Body Shop, Patagonia, and Ben and Jerry's – the world would still be moving toward environmental degradation and collapse (as in Thomson 1999). As corporations attempt to extend their markets to elites in the periphery, the dangerous ecological implications of expanding North American over-production and hyper-consumption practices come to the fore.[15] Whereas the risks of the industrial era were related to an *under*-supply of hygienic technology, now many risks have a basis in industrial *over*-production (Beck 1993, p. 21).

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[15] A preference for core consumption goods also has more structural implications, known as the Duesenberry effect: upper classes in the third world tend to copy the consumption

Of course it is deeply offensive to deem mass consumerism acceptable for core populations, but not for groups in the periphery and semi-periphery. As citizens groups in the South often note, it is core consumers that fail miserably in their responsibilities as global citizens.[16] The questioning of core consumption habits is summed up in the notion of the ecological "footprint", or "ecoscope", an accounting device of sustainability within a nation's borders (Gabriel and Lang 1995, p. 183; Wackernagel and Rees 1996). Ecological footprint analysis, along with other studies (Buitenkamp et al. 1993), suggests that sustainability in industrial countries would require a four, to ten-fold reduction in material and energy consumption (Wackernagel and Rees 1996, p. 144).[17] The earth would

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standards and patterns of industrially advanced countries, which means less savings and investment in the home country Martinussen, J. (1997). *Society, State and Market: A Guide to Competing Theories of Development*. (Halifax: Fernwood Books and Zed Books).

[16] The comments of Martin Khor, a Malaysian activist with *Consumers International,* demonstrate this north-south contradiction in consumer aspirations: "The main difficulties we face arise from the unequal distribution of income; the rich indulge in excessive consumption while the poor in The Third World have barely enough to survive . . . the most important changes required are changes in mentality about happiness and pleasure. *But this can only happen if the developed countries offer an example here*, because they disseminate their culture to the developing countries" Gabriel, Y., & Lang, T. (1995). *The Unmanageable Consumer: Contemporary Consumption and its Fragmentations*. (London: Sage Publications).

[17] A study on how the Netherlands could live within its own ecoscope by the year 2010 produced some startling estimations: water usage reduced by at least 40%; metal consumption reduced by 80% and 100% of material recycled; meat consumption reduced by 60-80%; timber usage cut by 60%; the virtual elimination of consumption of distant agricultural products and products from heated greenhouses; the dramatic reduction of

have to be 30% larger just to maintain current consumption levels and not deplete corresponding ecosystems (Wackernagel and Rees 1996, p. 149). Clearly such a dramatic reduction would be impossible without a serious challenge to the hegemonic status of consumer sovereignty in North America. Consumerism and citizenship may not be readily compatible, unless Western citizens go beyond token efforts to embrace the difficult set of choices involved with a resource-responsible global citizenship (Durning 1992).

iii. Globalisation and citizenship: an ambitious agenda

☙ Global citizenship is a highly ambitious agenda in an age of globalised corporate economies. A potent form of transnational solidarity exists when it comes to promoting the agenda of neo-liberal policies, commercialisation and corporate globalisation. Yet it is still unclear how to form an equally effective counter-hegemonic solidarity aimed at global justice, equality and sustainability. Transnational linkages between consumers resisting corporatisation seem especially difficult to forge, given that the average labourer, consumer, or citizen is far less cosmopolitan and mobile than jet-setting capitalist elites.

Globalisation is not a closed inevitability, but a dialectical phenomenon containing both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces. The challenge is not just to chart the dominant forces in the global system, but to identify the balance of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic ideas and institutions. Whereas neo-liberal

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car trips and airplane flights Buitenkamp, M., Venner, H., & Wams, T. (1993). 'Action Plan Sustainable Netherlands' (pp. 186), . Amsterdam. Friends of the Earth Netherlands.

globalism rationalises global hierarchies, counter-hegemonic projects challenge inequality at various levels (political, economic, ecological, etc.). Whereas neo-liberal globalism supports the limited liberal notion of consumer sovereignty, an effective counter-movement puts forward alternative political identities such as socially embedded citizenship built on equal rights, opportunities, and responsibilities. Whereas globalism perpetuates consumerism as the fuel driving the chimera of unlimited growth, effective counter-hegemony questions practices of hyper-consumption, and promotes discussion on substantive criteria for sustainability. Based on these cursory criteria, it becomes clear that a truly counter-hegemonic project to neo-liberal globalism must commit to promoting transnational economic democracy, and do more than merely promote an awareness of cultural difference. Ignoring transnational economic structures, and focussing only on questions of cultural identity or political solidarity, encourages a myopic multiculturalism where cultural pluralism is venerated without any sense of the structural inequality underlying difference.

III. Fair Trade Claims, Limitations, and Counter-hegemonic potential

☙ To what extent does the discourse of fair trade fulfil these criteria for an effective counter-hegemonic project?[18] A useful starting point is the claims of fair-trade organisations. Although definitions vary, fair-trade is generally presented as an alternative to the global trading system; it promotes trade based on relationships of mutual respect and co-operation rather than profit. Trade is based on a fair price, often defined as providing a 'living wage' for producers. In addition, fair trade organisations usually commit to purchasing directly from small producers, providing access to credit and technical assistance, encouraging sustainable environmental practices, establishing long-term relationships with producers based on mutual respect, and supporting democratically run workers' co-operatives. TransFair USA defines its agenda ambitiously as being to "redefine the producer-consumer relationship", making an even more impressive claim for fair trade:

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[18] My objective is to draw out salient themes in the fair-trade discourse, relating them to broader social discourses about consumerism and globalisation. This should not be misunderstood as an outright condemnation of fair-trade as a partial *strategy* to promote a

> Fair trade can and will connect issues of global poverty with the negative externalities of American consumerism and produce new, powerful and productive relationships (TransFair 1999a).

These are clearly good intentions, which seem beyond reproach or criticism. Contradictions arise, however, when these good intentions are translated into appeals to sell fair-trade products in consumer societies like those of North America. My analysis revealed three particularly troubling contradictions, or themes, that cast doubt on the counter-hegemonic potential of fair-trade discourse: 1) an unquestioned support for consumer sovereignty; 2) support for micro-

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better quality of life for impoverished communities, an issue that I explore briefly in the conclusion.

lifestyle politics over politicised, public sphere awareness; and 3) the normalisation of underdevelopment and over-consumption.

Theme 1. Consumer-sovereignty: 32 flavours and then some

☙ A focus on individual choice and consumer sovereignty was a persistent theme in the fair trade discourse – a theme that makes for some rather strange bedfellows. Political leaders throughout the industrialised world have been able to use hegemonic ideals of consumer sovereignty to identify with the feelings of the 'masses', as when Thatcher and Reagan presented the model of consumer choice as an adequate framework for all forms of citizenship (Gabriel and Lang 1995, p. 97; Slater 1997, p. 37). For new right gurus Milton and Rose Friedman, choice in the marketplace produces liberty and non-conformity, and can even be seen as superior to electoral democracy:

> When you vote daily in the supermarket, you get precisely what you voted for, and so does everyone else. The ballot box produces conformity without unanimity; the marketplace, unanimity without conformity (Friedman and Friedman 1980, p. 65-66)

The idea of "voting with your dollar" is heavily emphasised in the fair trade discourse. Several fair-trade seminars I attended ended on this inspirational note – "You have a vote! It's right there in your wallet!" This moral imperative to vote in the market-place was not accompanied by discussion, or even recognition of the skewed distribution of 'votes' (dollars) in consumer society. The valorisation of consumer sovereignty was also revealed in the emphasis on the range of goods, their convenience, and the assurance of the high quality provided. The Bridgehead fair trade catalogue reported that their “goals looking forward” were to provide consumers “more stores and more selection.” (Bridgehead #5). Traditional development goals — eliminating poverty, reducing technological dependence and so forth — are apparently self-evident to Bridgehead catalogue shoppers. TransFair USA stressed that before consumers will buy fairly traded coffee, they have to be shown that there is “no compromise in product quality”, and “easy availability, that is no trips to special stores” (1999f).

While one might contend that “choice” is a natural part of doing business in a market-society, what is interesting in the case of fair trade, a self-declared alternative to exploitative trade relations, is how the consumer sovereignty discourse is so thoroughly embraced. In fact, one of the stated goals of fair trade organisations is to develop relationships with producers to help them adapt to the changing styles, trends, and preferences of first world consumers (FTF 1999b). The overall effect is to create a powerful justification for a globalised world where a small elite has the right to choose between the best products that the world’s cultures have to offer; this elite also has the right to change its mind when certain trends and goods become passé. This world is not presented objectionably, but is ironically given a moral veneer since ‘choices’ are made in the name of fair trade and development. So although the rhetoric of consumer sovereignty is a realistic sales strategy, it can also be identified as troublesome at a deeper level.

The discourse of choice operates ideologically when it obscures the production side of the commodity equation, and the associated inequalities. Although the very idea of a fair-trade product draws the consumers' eye to the notion of unfair global production processes, it is possible that most people who buy these products absorb very little information about the production process, perhaps a short paragraph on the side of a bag of coffee. Production information is often produced on low-budget photocopies, in stark contrast to the seductive catalogue pages displaying the fair-trade wares available for consumption. The producers of the beautiful handcrafted items are shown in only a few places in the Bridgehead catalogue, and these depictions are designed to produce minimal anxiety and maximum satisfaction for the consumer choosing between hundreds of products.

The emphasis on the extreme range of choices available to consumers also obscures the paucity of choices available to producers, who are often driven to produce handicrafts when they are forced off their land. It is assumed that the choice for producers is to either remain impoverished, or produce goods for the fair-trade market. Local self-sufficiency, shortening food links, or de-linking from the global economy are not presented as viable choices. The imperative is to produce as quickly and efficiently as possible.[19]

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[19] One report describes the necessity for women weavers in a Guatemalan co-operative to "adopt modern production processes, to increase the output rate and marketability of their weavings", since the traditional waistloom produces only 50 centimetres each day Wilshaw, R. (1994). 'Invisible Threads. Oxfam's Bridge Programme'. *Focus on Gender*, 2, 23-28.. The desire to maximize productivity might seem obvious according to those socialised in standard economic logic, but there are implicit questions of power involved

An ideal of consumer sovereignty naturalised for North American consumers also presents a narrow notion of choice available to would-be citizens. Political action is reduced to a choice between doing nothing, and buying a product. The primary choice for potential consumers is between brands, and does not include the choice of not buying, or engaging in other types of political action. With the exception of coffee, many fair trade items are bought *in addition to* the usual range of unfairly traded, environmentally harmful consumption items. Although they might give the consumer the moral satisfaction of helping a women's pottery co-operative in India, these purchases do not challenge the practices, or relative power of the high consumption lifestyle.

The greatest ideological abuse of the notion of "choice" is when it obscures the persistence of social inequality.[20] In consumer cultures choice is typically depicted as a great social equaliser, destroying group boundaries and creating a world where everyone has a 'vote'. The language of "mutual-respect" between

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in imposing this view of production. What are the cultural implications of having to 'choose' footlooms over traditional waistloms? Why must these women 'choose' weaving as a livelihood in the first place? And why, despite all the best efforts of OXFAM, do these women still only earn on average 7 US cents per day? Wilshaw, R. (1994). 'Invisible Threads. Oxfam's Bridge Programme'. *Focus on Gender*, 2, 23-28.

[20] The modern myth of the equal, autonomous consumer has of course, never been based on a reality of social equality. Tracing the role of consumer culture in modernity, Slater argues that the consumer revolution of the 18th century and its expanding "world of goods" (coffee, tea, fruits, etc.), was in large part based on new commodities entering European territory as a result of colonial exploitation Slater, D. (1997). *Consumer Culture and Modernity*. (Oxford: Polity Press).. The notion of the West as civilised, righteously affluent, and made up of sovereign, choosing subjects has deep roots in Orientalist scholarship that attempts to distinguish and legitimate the conquerors from the colonised.

"equal trading partners" (Bridgehead #6) used in the fair-trade literature has a similar effect, blending together the sharp economic and social differences between the producers and consumers of the products. Besides obscuring producer-consumer power differentials, the inequality amongst North American consumers is also hidden from view. The commonly used phrase, "as consumers, we can make a difference", paints a picture of a homogenous mass of equal participants in the market place. The ability to pay the fair-trade premium price becomes a matter of individual will power and morality, instead of the socio-economic issue that it is for class-stratified North American consumers.

This leads us to another problem with the choice metaphor – it has no way of distinguishing degrees of control over choices. The consumer sovereignty ideal presents consumer as either free choosers, or manipulated dupes – not a very sophisticated portrayal of the subtle moral issues involved in political action. There are many important gradations of autonomous choice that are only recognised with a more explicitly political analytical apparatus, such as the language of citizenship and collective action, an issue to which I will now turn.

Theme 2. Lifestyle politics and a diminished public sphere: from boycott to 'buycott'

☙ We are not only interested in what is present in the fair trade discourse, but also in the *absence* of reference to discourses of politics, economics, capitalism, and democracy. Modernity can be seen as having parallel discourses of consumerism/markets, and politics/democracy (Stevenson 1995, p. 110). In consumer cultures, these discourses are not equal. Consumers rule over citizens, and lifestyle politics reigns over more traditional means of political lobbying and democratic participation. The potential of the pubic sphere as an arena of critical reflection is minimised, as public communication is predominantly organised around market transactions.

Like the discourse of the new right, fair trade discourse appears to accept the focus on consumer identities over political, public identities as natural and inevitable. Calls to "action" frequently begin with phrases like the following: "As consumers, our purchasing choices also have a global impact"(EE 1999b). On the *10,000 Villages* home page, seven suggestions of "how you can help" are listed (1999); aside from prayer, the suggestions revolve entirely around the retail experience. This is a telling example of the de-politicisation of global inequality, and a fairly typical depiction of political action in the fair-trade literature (see EE 1999b; TransFair 1999b). When consumers are urged to lobby their government, it is to promote the use of fair-trade coffee in the government coffee shops – not to lobby for political changes that would make Southern producers less vulnerable (e.g., fighting corporate rights agreements like the MAI, lobbying for the reduction of third world debt), or to make North American governments more accountable to their citizens.

In my search of English language Internet sources on fair trade, only one article was found which seriously questioned the efficacy of lifestyle politics like fair-trade. In contrast to those who see fair-trade as the next wave of modern marketing, Bob Thompson instead describes fair-trade in a more modest tone, sensitive to the multi-dimensionality of struggles for justice in a global economy:

> Some of us prefer to think of fair trade as a bridge between southern producers and northern consumers; the thin edge of but one wedge in a multifaceted struggle for global justice and wholesale transformation of the current marketplace controlled by huge corporate interests . . . (1999)

In contrast to Thompson's modesty about the scope of change possible through fair-trade purchases, most of the fair-trade literature is highly ambitious about the scope of change that would occur through fair-trade, and about the power of lifestyle politics. TransFair USA states this very specifically, supporting a shift in focus from "boycotts to 'buycotts' (1999d). While the focus on the individual choice is clearly a sensible sales pitch, it tends to concomitantly minimise the accountability of the state and corporations for the public good. The individual is encouraged to take responsibility for global injustice, but in most cases action is limited to purchasing fair-trade products.

The discourse of individual responsibility and lifestyle politics is linked to a wider trend in the neo-liberal era. In North America a public discourse emerged that blamed an abstract construction of humanity for a host of social and ecological problems. Glenda Wall traces these developments in the Canadian environmental movement, and found that particularly after 1985, the discourse of individual responsibility for ecological problems came to the forefront at the same time critical analysis of corporate and government practice diminished (forthcoming). We are all to blame for the hole in the ozone layer, just as we are all to blame for poverty and underdevelopment.

The lifestyle politics of the environmental movement – green consumerism – is often explicitly identified in the fair trade literature as a model for fair-trade politics (EE 1999b). The question remains, however, whether this type of politics masks more problems than it solves (Luke 1997; Luke 1998; Sandilands 1993). Sandilands argues that the notion of green consumerism is an oxymoron, since it makes no reference to the systems of over-production and over-consumption that fuels environmentally unsustainable growth (*ibid*). She identifies green consumerism as a process of environmental privatisation, a move which depoliticizes environmental problems, shifts accountability from government and corporations towards individual lifestyle choices, and leaves the daily lives of consumers relatively unchanged (Sandilands 1993, p. 45; Sandilands 1997, p. 77). What is being sold in the green product is not just a product, but a feeling, a reassurance that one is doing their part — "if you buy this product, you can help to save the world" (1993, p. 45). At the same time people's need to participate is satisfied by lifestyle politics, the broader outcome is more problematic. Sandilands aptly summarises:

> At best, such isolated actions forestall the inevitability of radical change to social/environmental relations; at worst, these actions, however well-intentioned, are part of the problem. . . . None of these actions challenges capitalist economic growth. . . none of these actions provokes a serious examination of the social relations and structures that have brought about our current crisis. Rather the idea that these actions are part of 'saving the earth" would seem to turn attention away from subversive, collective, or public solutions (1993, p. 46).

There are some startling parallels with fair-trade consumerism. Salvation is sought through consumption. Small changes are presented as making a big difference. Like green consumerism, fair consumption means consuming differently, not consuming less. Fair trade assuages your conscience, and makes your house appear more hip and worldly. Individual lifestyle politics is key. Forget about challenging larger organisations like governments and corporations. Justice can fit into your daily lifestyle.

Of course there are significant differences between fair-trade consumerism and green consumerism. In the environmental case, large corporations usually controlled and orchestrated the shift towards green-washing their products. In the case of fair-trade, development workers in the non-profit sector work on a much smaller-scale and with explicit humanitarian objectives. Still, the past decades of corporate green-washing should be instructive for activists; the area is ripe for corporate co-optation of the public's genuine desire to see the end of sweatshop labour and other exploitative practices. Nike's "no-harm" clothing campaign is simply one of the more public, sophisticated variants on this theme.[21]

Another important difference between fair-trade ideology and green consumerism is the unexplored ties between Orientalist philosophy, globalisation, and consumer demand for 'third world' chic.[22] As Edward Said's work (1978) and successive scholarship on Orientalism has shown, the idealisation of the Other has long been an important source of inspiration for Western aesthetic sensibilities. In the 1960s Norman Mailer spoke of resistance occurring through the figure of the "Hipster" in his essay entitled "The White Negro" (1959). In Mailer, the appeal to the exotic is blatant: "Hip is the sophistication of the wise primitive in a giant jungle, and so its appeal is still beyond the civilized man."(1959, p. 343). Hip requires an "affirmation of the barbarian, for it requires a primitive passion about human nature to believe that individual acts of violence are always to be preferred to the collective violence of the State" (1959, p. 355). There are few nuances here. Individual desires are good, collective action and the state are bad. Most importantly, hipness is an individual choice.

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[21] Corporations are also pushing behind the scenes to preserve access to cheap labour, while giving the appearance of eliminating sweatshop conditions. Following the public outcry over sweat-shops associated with WalMart & Cathy Lee Gifford, Disney, the GAP, and others, the US presidential task force ("The Apparel Industry Partnership") reached agreements on workplace codes of conduct which critics claimed gave "the good housekeeping seal of approval to a 'kinder, gentler sweatshop" Ross, A. (1997). 'After the Year of the Sweatshop: Postscript'. In A. Ross (Ed.), *No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade, and the Rights of Garment Workers* (pp. 291-296). New York: Verso.

[22] I am not aware of research that attempts to directly document the romantacization of the exotic in global consumerism. One suggestive finding: in Shor's research of North American consumers, the most highly ranked answer in response to, "things that you would like to own or do someday", was to have an "exotic vacation" Schor, J. B. (1998). *The Overspent American*. (USA: Basic Books).

Mailer's hipster foreshadowed an important trend towards a lifestyle politics where one resists conformity by consuming and identifying oneself in the rebellious Hip camp (Frank 1997, p. 12). And as Mailer's "White Negro" essay grossly displays, the desire to be hip is often strongly linked to Orientalist notions of the exotic, rebellious Other. In the inside of the Bridgehead catalogue, the Managing Director calls on the viewer to take part in a neo-colonial mail order experience: "We invite you to bring the world home" (Bridgehead #5). Although appeals to capture the exotic are not always this literal, the fair trade goods themselves contain important messages about global inequalities and North American desires to possess a piece of the exotic Other.

What message is conveyed by owning a hand-dyed indigo duvet cover from India convey? What lies behind the desire for a "Kathmandu Carpet" from Nepal, or a set of "wonderfully ornate maracas" from Peru? (Bridgehead #4 and #5). Clearly there is a polysemic meaning involved in the consumption of these goods, including simple appreciation for an aesthetically-pleasing handicraft. However, it also seems clear that "bringing the world home" as a commodity draws on a long Western tradition of Orientalism. Beneath the attractive veneer of fair trade chic is an explored desire to place the Other safely within ones' reach, and an extreme power differential separating core consumers from peripheral producers.

All of this leads to unanswered questions about the political efficacy of the lifestyle politics of consumerism.[23] When I go to a Third World craft store and buy a Zapatista doll (made by Guatemalans in Mexico city) for $8.50 (US), what am I really contributing to the plight of impoverished *campesinos* in Southern Mexico? If anything, the availability of such items creates a false sense of solidarity with life or death struggles, and allows the analytical gaze to wander away from the ways in which my lifestyle and my citizenship are connected to the Zapatista struggles. NAFTA, the inter-continental arms trade, the pillage of Chiapanecan resources, the degradation of indigenous rights across North America – these important issues are nowhere to be found when I take my Zapatista doll and credit card up to the cash register. This brings us to a third and final theme – the balance between education and normalisation in the fair trade discourse.

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[23] The political efficacy of lifestyle politics is not well addressed by the post-modern literature on consumerism. For example, in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau uses metaphors of guerilla warfare and anti-colonial struggles to describe how consumers can manipulate the sign-values assigned to particular commodities de Certeau, M. (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press). By using products in ways that were not intended, the consumer ("*bricoleur")* distorts, twists, and laughs at the system of mass consumption that thinks it is manipulating them. Similarly, Fiske sees shop-lifting, joy-riding, and ripping one's jeans as a tactical raid on the system; he describes shop-lifting as "not a guerrilla raid just upon the store owners themselves, but upon the power block in general" Fiske, J. (1989). *Understanding Popular Culture*. (London: Unwin Hyman).

Theme 3. Normalising over-consumption and underdevelopment

☙ Fair-trade discourse offers an important opportunity for education about the complex factors underlying underdevelopment. Although attempts at development education are a key part of the fair-trade discourse, the strange juxtaposition of core choice, and peripheral poverty works to normalise over-consumption and underdevelopment, stifling the possibilities for critical public discussion on these issues.

Nowhere is this juxtaposition of over-consumption and underdevelopment more evident than in the glossy pages of a fair-trade catalogue (Bridgehead #4 & #5). Although Bridgehead will send more details of their projects on request, their major marketing tool is the catalogue. The catalogue is beautifully produced on glossy paper with stunning photographs, and an extensive array of goods. Bridgehead wants to impress upon potential customers the importance of ethical consumption, but it does not want to scare them off either. Your purchases are intended to promote 'development', yet the catalogue images do not inspire any sense of the need for urgent action to combat global inequality, the impoverishment of the "fourth world", or over-development in North America. Instead, these images are designed to promote a sense of urgency about buying something.

Besides this visual normalisation, the fair-trade concept itself tends to normalise, and give moral legitimacy to the idea that some populations should produce products according to the desires and whims of other populations. The whole notion of what is 'fair' is revealing. The meaning of "fair" for ATOs ranges from "mutual respect", to a "living wage", to the country's "minimum wage". Nowhere is it suggested that producers should ideally be paid at a level befitting the labour of North American consumers, and nowhere is it suggested that the core consumer should be consuming at the level befitting the producers of the goods. So "fair" in the discourse seems to imply not a global democracy of citizens with equal economic and political rights; instead the vision is of a global trading system of inequality with a more human face.

The solution is presented simply: fair trade is better than aid (IFAT 1999b; TransFair 1999f). Straight transfers of wealth are not mentioned, nor are the complex networks underlying the current global distribution of resources. Although a large part of impoverishment in the neoliberal era is due to wealth being channelled into a larger global trading systems, particularly since the debt crisis, there is no talk about shortening trade links and reorienting local resources back towards meeting local needs.[24] The issue of disproportionate power is not addressed, and the goals remain confined to helping the poor through fair-trade practices – all without addressing the living conditions of the world's elite.[25]

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[24] I do not mean to imply that autarky is the only acceptable development strategy, especially since many markets and equipment are only found in core regions Brown, M. B. (1993). *Fair Trade. Reform and Realities in the International Trading System.* (London: Zed Books). At the same time, there are powerful social and ecological arguments for reorienting talents and resources back towards the locality Andruss, V. (1990). 'Home! A Bioregional Reader', Gabriola Island, Canada. New Society Publishers. Korten, D. (1995). *When Corporations Rule the World.* (USA: Kumarian Press Inc.). Korten, D. C. (1999). *The Post-corporate world: life after capitalism.* (San

Although the fair-trade organisations vary in their presentation of global inequality, the discourse tends to present a sugar-coated liberal vision where everyone has an equal voice, and where global citizenship has already been achieved. Fair trade is a development solution where everybody wins: the first world consumer gets a hand-crafted item along with a clear-conscience, while the producers get an improved standard of living. TransFair USA describes the benefits of fair trade as follows: "In a global village, we prosper as our less fortunate neighbors prosper" (TransFair 1999e). Nations become neighbours, and we accept that some nations ("neighbors") are naturally more fortunate than others. The causes underlying global inequality (e.g, imperialism, neo-imperialism, trade advantages, the debt crisis) disappear in this quaint metaphor. The notion that natural resources are limited, and that the first world neighbours gobble up a disproportionate share of the global commons, is also implicitly accepted. A TransFair USA web site explicitly endorses the right of core consumers to consume as their desires dictate:

Francisco: Berrett-Koehler). Rees, W. E., & Wackernagel, M. (1994). 'Ecological Footprints and Appropriated Carrying Capacity: Measuring the Natural Capital Requirements of the Human Economy'. In A. M. Jansson, M. Hammer, C. Folke & R. Costanza (Eds.), *Investing in Natural Capital: The Ecological Economics Approach to Sustainability*. Washington: Island Press.

[25] The IFAT Code of Fair Trade Practice refers to the need for sustainable development, but does not mention overconsumption in the North IFAT (1999a). 'Code of Practice', Internet. . International Federation for Alternative Trade (IFAT). http://www.ifat.org/code_of_practice-eng.html.

> You can help make fair trade happen in the U.S. And given the U.S.'s role as a huge engine of consumption in this global economy, you will be helping the earth develop sustainable methods of doing business (1999g).

Respect, and even sustainable development, can be produced with a simple purchase as an equally empowered "citizen of the world". Even though handicraft production is often one of the last options available to landless peasants in dire need of land reform (Wilshaw 1994, p. 24), the Fair Trade Federation defends the production of non-essential items as an important part of developing fair-trade relations:

> Clothing, utensils, bowls, baskets, and ritual items are windows into the heart of a culture. As we embrace becoming citizens of the world, our appreciation for cultures other than our own is magnified (FTF 1999b).

A hopeful vision of globalism multiculturalism, but one that supports diversity with little recognition of inequality. Global consumers perhaps, but not global citizens with equal economic resources or political rights. Buying one of these items may make me a global consumer, but does this make me a global citizen? Not if we understand citizenship as implying equality of political rights and economic resources.

This is not to say that efforts at education are not made by Fair Trade organisations. Some organisations, such as Equal Exchange, provide a wide variety of informative articles on their web site and in their *Java Jive* newsletter

(EE 1999a; EE 1999b). In contrast to the glossy images of their catalogues, Bridgehead also produces a photocopied newsletter, *Bean Around the Block*, which includes inspiring quotations on political action, and even a call for political action protesting militarization in Chiapas (Bridgehead #6).

But most fair-trade education efforts reflect the contradictions I outlined above: an emphasis on consumer sovereignty, and a focus on fair trade as the most important solution to global inequality. Consumers are to be educated to consume "differently"; there is no mention of encouraging consumers to consume *less,* or to engage in the world as citizens (IFAT 1999a). Education is optional, and ultimately subservient to the goal of consumption.

IV. Opportunities, counter-hegemony, and the public sphere

❧ At the same time these contradictions emerged, it is important to emphasise that no discourse is homogeneous. The separation between citizens and consumers is not rigid or absolute. Although though the most radical self-critical elements of fair-trade discourse do not make it onto the glossy catalogue pages, certain discursive elements contain important counter-hegemonic currents encouraging criticism of neo-liberal globalism, and a turn towards citizenship-based politics. There are hopeful instances where the issues behind fair-trade are effectively politicised as public issues rather than purely private, lifestyle issues, giving rise to the possibility of an expanded, more informed public sphere.

Some groups are taking up the project of radical education in a more profound way, such as the "10 days for global justice campaign" in Canada (10days 1999).[26] Because the organisers are a broad ecumenical group and not an ATO, the pedagogical goal to educate citizens about development issues remains central and primary, while the lifestyle issues surrounding fair-trade products are presented as a partial solution. One education tool, a page of four post-cards, highlights the possibilities for addressing consumption issues in a more politicised fashion. One post-card is addressed to the Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs, and calls for a leadership role ending sweatshop conditions. Another card is addressed to "myself and my household", calling on the reader to avoid excessive consumption and to challenge the Canadian government to protect workers' rights at home and around the world.

Another promising instance of fair-trade in the public sphere was the recent resolution by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to declare May 8th as Fair Trade Day in that city. Not only did the resolution declare the city's opposition to "unregulated economic globalisation in its current state", but it also made a commitment to support "fair trade, socially responsible investment, and sustainable and equitable economic development" (FTF 1999a). In contrast to the emerging globalism, which gives corporations universal rights of entry and access to global markets, the San Francisco resolution reasserted the rights of citizen bodies to set public priorities. To do this, the resolution relied on the Commerce Clause of the US Constitution which allows public entities to "place restrictions on the use of public funds" (FTF 1999a). The fair-trade issue in this case was taken on by a level of government, and transcended the scope of individual micro shopping decisions.

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[26] The 10 days campaign reflects a sophisticated understanding of complex connections in a global society. The campaign was renamed ("10 days for global justice" instead of "ten days for world development") to reflect an "evolving understanding of our global reality", and the realisation that "we cannot be in true solidarity with out sisters and brothers in other parts of the world unless we engage in effort to bring about justice in our own communities and nation" 10days (1999). 'Ten Days for Global Justice. Empowering Canadians for Global Change.', Internet. 10 Days for Global Justice. http://www.dwatch.ca/~tendays/tendays.htm.

Another example of positive correlation between fair trade and a democratic public sphere is found in the International Federation for Alternative Trade (IFAT). IFAT holds biennial conferences for producers and ATOs to exchange information and viewpoints in a non-commodified context. Bob Thompson describes these forums as "a valuable venue" where "the northern buyers do not hold the power of the chequebook" as they usually do in market exchanges, "despite all the goodwill that exists in our efforts to be 'alternatives'" (1999). This venue has hosted important debates on what qualifies as fair-trade, creating fair-trade criteria for coffee, and supporting debates around criteria for other products.[27] Instead of working to destroy the competition, ATOs commit to an alternative co-operative ethic of business based on maximising benefits to producers (see also EE 1999b; IFAT 1999a). Although these organisations are still minor players in the scheme of global trading, businesses able to defy conventional logic and combine social values with viable business ventures can provide a powerful moral counter-point to the dominant logic of neo-liberalism.

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[27] There are four criteria for fairly traded coffee: "1) minimum price; 2) purchase of beans from democratically organised small growers, 3) provision of pre-harvest credit and 4) agreement to purchase on a long-term, not one time, basis." Other products are more difficult to certify; handicrafts, in particular, are difficult because of the diversity, scope, and scale of their production Thomson, B. (1999). 'Fair Trade -- Frequently Asked Questions -- FAQ'. October 1998, Internet. . Fair TradeMark Canada. http://www.web.net/fairtrade/who/fair2.html.

V. Conclusion: potential and pitfalls of the shopping strategy

> . . . there is no shortage of sustainability strategies. What we lack is intellectual and emotional acceptance of the fact that humanity is materially dependent on nature and that nature's productive capacity is limited.
> -(Wackernagel and Rees 1996, p. 156)

☙ Consumer-solidarity strategies based on alternative principles like fair trade have the potential to both challenge and accommodate the dominant ideology and practices of consumerism and neo-liberal globalism. Fair-trade discourse offers the possibility that core identities and value systems might challenge the hegemonic ideologies and practices of neo-liberal globalisation. Fair trade discourse may also undermine commodity fetishism by forcing consumers to consider factors of production usually shrouded from view. Consideration of production can lead to a questioning of inequitable labour relations, the sustainability of core consumer practices, and can encourage a reorientation away from consumerism and towards socially engaged citizenship.

At the same time, the fair-trade discourse continues within a long-standing mode of regulation within advanced capitalism, and does not perfectly fulfil the criteria for counter-hegemonic collective action outlined above. Buying products to express a subversive political identity, or make a statement against industrial society is part of a larger corporate discourse based on incorporating critical elements of sub-cultures. Fair trade discourse also tends to rely on individualistic notions of choice and consumer sovereignty, obscures the structural linkages between core and periphery in a globalised economy, and belies the collective environmental implications of individual free choice in the marketplace. The ethic of consumer sovereignty does not force consumers to consider their relative autonomy vis à vis third world producers, and retains the invisibility of structurally irrelevant economic regions that do not produce consumer goods for core regions. Because of its unwillingness to critically assess the consumerism of its customers, the fair-trade discourse supports a liberal vision of difference without a serious discussion of inequality, or the emotional and intellectual barriers to sustainability.

Producers may experience material benefits from fair-trade relations, but even then the question of their counter-hegemonic impact is unclear. As Bob Thompson questions:

> At what point do increased sales and economies of scale cross the fuzzy line between more income and benefits for producers, to dependency on

> mainstream markets and potential loss of the cutting edge in challenging unjust world trade relations? (1999).

Of course the contradictions explored above need to be considered in the context of the power of consumerism as a regulatory force, and the real-life strategic pressures facing ATOs. Most ATOs are affiliated with an NGO. Unlike NGOs, however, ATOs must at least break-even to demonstrate that fair-trade is a viable alternative to conventional market exchanges (Thomson 1999). A low-budget, non-glossy, guilt-ridden, education-driven, inequality-focussed publication might not sell many products, and this would threaten the very viability of the ATO as a business enterprise. It could be argued that fair-traders are simply facilitating the most likely, and feasible act of solidarity between 'third world' producers and 'first world' consumers.

Although dreaming of emancipatory alternatives is important, political theorists should avoid a dream world where consumer identities are easily shed and the garb of citizenship an equally attractive substitute. It is obviously easier to think of oneself as a consumer than a citizen. Consumption involves direct relationships of buying and selling on a day-to-day basis. In contrast, the indirect relationships of state, bureaucracy, and economy that mediate our citizenship elude the direct, face-to-face knowledge of most people in Western societies (Calhoun 1991). As Gabriel and Lang soberly write, "even if people wish to be citizens, the flow of economic history appears to offer them little choice but to be more or less socially aware consumers" (1995, p. 185). Building alternative identities derived from conscientious consumption may be a more realistic strategy than expecting collective identities of citizenship to spontaneously emerge from thin air. Although there is no inevitable transition, conscientious consumption could serve as a conduit to a broader notion of citizenship, where an obsessive focus on individual 'choice', is replaced, or at least supplemented with a broader notion of community, sustainability, justice, and democracy.

Given the power of consumerism in people's everyday lives, and the wide-spread ignorance about the sources and systemic causes of underdevelopment, it is hardly surprising that many core consumers see fair-trade as one of the best way to help the third world (Wilshaw 1994). Fair-trade fits into people's daily lives, and doesn't push broader, more radical positions onto reluctant consumers. Yet the very success of lifestyle politics, is paradoxically the key to understanding why fair trade is a realistic, but not a very radical counter-hegemonic strategy.

Appendix A

Bridgehead Textual Sources: pamphlets, leaflets, and catalogues

Bridgehead #1	"Thank-you for drinking Fair Trade coffee" Received June 1999. Appearance: brown leaflet
Bridgehead #2	"Fair Trade: A Brief Guide to Our coffee" Received June 1999. Appearance: purple and orange pamphlet
Bridgehead #3	"Issue Sheet No. 1 Putting the Farmers First: Shade Grown Coffee" Published in co-operation with Equal Exchange. Received June 1999. Appearance: 8 x 11" photocopied sheet
Bridgehead #4	Bridgehead Catalogue — Spring 1999 Appearance: 13 pages, glossy print
Bridgehead #5	Bridgehead Catalogue — Fall 1998 Appearance: 25 pages, glossy print
Bridgehead #6	"Bean Around the Block" – No. 1, September 1, 1998 Bridgehead coffee newsletter Appearance: 8 x 11" photocopy, 4 pages

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

Global enclosure and the moral economy of resistance

Times of transition are difficult to
characterize and even to name.
-Santos (1995, iv).

☙ This dissertation research eschewed the positivist research aspiration of comprehensiveness. Its agenda was both limited and ambitious: to provide insight into the shape and texture of challenges to the dominant paradigm of neo-liberal globalism, and map emerging forms of solidarity. This type of social-theoretical research takes certain risks, since both positivists and grand theorists can take offence at such an approach. Early sociologists like Max Weber recognized this danger:

> There are… 'subject matter specialists' and 'interpretive specialists'. The fact-greedy gullet of the former can be filled only with legal documents, statistical worksheets and questionnaires, but he [sic] is insensitive to the refinement of a new idea. The gourmandise of the latter dulls his [sic] taste for facts by ever new intellectual subtleties. The genuine artistry…manifests itself through its ability to *produce new knowledge by interpreting already known facts according to known viewpoints* (1949:112, emphasis mine).

While asking broad questions risks offending specialists, it remains politically important to draw attention to new forms of solidarity and their supporting paradigms – particularly since the hegemonic paradigm of neo-liberal capitalism is increasingly found to be politically, socially and ecologically bankrupt. Too often absolute faith in free markets is countered by absolute fatalism in the face of these challenges. Eco-feminists Maria Mies and Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen insist that the "[m]ania of omnipotence and of impotence are two sides of the same coin", and strongly criticize the tendency to view the globalised economy as a "black hole" from which there is no escape (1999, 26).

Social movements around the world have been unable to afford the luxury of despair. A desire for survival unites them against enemies of global capitalism, and gives birth to alternatives – however fragmentary, disparate, or disunited they might appear. With the goal of avoiding the type of 'black-hole' despair that has emerged in the face of pressing ecological and social crises, this dissertation has provided 'snapshots' of hope that address key themes in the construction of new forms of solidarity against global capitalism. These themes range from epistemological questions of emancipatory knowledge, to normative agendas found across various social movements: the commons, democracy, and the attempt to build a transnational solidarity that is sensitive to scale, inequality, and the seemingly insatiable desires of consumerism.

These ‘snapshots’, or case-studies have confirmed Santos’ contention that three principles of community regulation – solidarity, participation, pleasure – will have an enhanced role to play in building alternatives to globalism, or what he calls, a “new common sense” (1995, 50). In the first instance, this involves a new *ethical common sense* based on a notion of ecological reciprocity widened beyond liberal individualism towards a biospheric life host. This is a common sense embodied in a sense of *commons*. It also suggests the importance of a new *political common sense* that rejects minimalist procedural democracy and maximizes participation of citizen-subjects. A new political common sense demands equitable participation, but rigorously politicises questions of consumerism and development that prohibit the realisation of democracy across wide expanses of inequality and exploitation that characterize the global economy. Finally, we observed signals of an emerging *aesthetic common sense* that recognizes a need to move beyond a transnational solidarity of guilt, and towards the construction of aesthetic pleasures that are not ecologically destructive or reliant on social degradation and impoverishment. While not a panacea for colonial inequities, the voluntary simplicity movement is emblematic of this trend. Leaders of this movement reject asceticism as a motivating strategy, and instead advocate a life that is connected, ecocentric, yet immensely pleasurable – a life of “of creativity and celebration, a life of community and participatory democracy” (Andrews 1998, 22).[1]

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[1] Similarly, recent critical theory rejects the highly pessimistic accounts of the Frankfurt school, and call for an integration of the right to private pleasure, with wider, public forms of rights and obligations (See Stevenson 1995, 113).

While I have argued against the fatalism that typically accompanies analysis of neo-liberal globalism, hope cannot be a substitute for rigorous empirical accounts of the destruction, exploitation, and continuities of global capitalism. The arguments in Chapter Two identified key elements of an epistemological transition, arguing that globalisation researchers must explicitly commit to a project of emancipatory knowledge based on an ongoing dialogue with those most affected by and engaged with social struggles against neo-liberal globalism. This type of emancipatory knowledge runs contrary to the dominant trend of top-down, "knowledge as regulation" found in globalisation literature. While agreement on emancipatory knowledge can serve as an important starting point, methodologies of emancipatory research are far from decided; the nuts and bolts of these methodological dilemmas were explored through the work of Paulo Freire. His work suggests the need to reject the detachment tendency found in mainstream, positivist accounts of globalism, and instead focus on a dialogical interplay with those affected by globalisation processes. This requires that we reprioritise four methodological dualisms: theory and practice, the 'is' and the 'ought', objective and subjective approaches, and hope and fatalism. The goal is not to dissolve, or deny these tensions, but to explore them dialectically in the hope of becoming more self-reflective, and less complicit with the "instrument effects" of globalisation research. As Goldman identifies in the case of commons literature (1997; 1998), globalisation analysis can unwittingly shore up an agenda of transnational capitalist expansion. We must continually question to what extent globalisation research serves as an analysis written largely by, and for the minority world, or global north.

My intention is not to dismiss the possibilities of intellectual interventions, or to deny the importance of academic work that seeks connections. It is to insist on the importance of maintaining humility, political self-awareness, and an appreciation for forms of knowledge created outside the university. Academic pursuits are not isolated endeavours, but take place within larger ethical battles over the social and ecological exhaustion that characterises capitalism on a global scale. Such battles involve the formation of rational arguments, but must simultaneously resist the hegemony of instrumental rationality. This battle must involve an element of social regulation, but posits community regulation as a counterpoint to the all powerful, and ubiquitous 'invisible hand' of market regulation, and corporate-driven developmentalism. This battle is about strategies, alternative institutions, and new sources of material subsistence, but it cannot avoid the morality plays, ideas, and imagination that reside within the realm of "moral economy".

In his landmark studies of the English working class, English historian E. P. Thompson used the term moral economy to refer to confrontations in the 18th century English market place. These conflicts took place when the regulatory logic of the market was used to deny working people access to basic necessities like food. For Thompson, the idea of moral economy referred to a "bundle of beliefs, usages and forms associated with the marketing of food in time of dearth", but also involved the "deep emotions stirred by dearth, the claims which the crowd made upon the authorities in such crises, and the outrage provoked by profiteering in life-threatening emergencies" which "imparted a particular "moral" charge to protest" (Thompson 1993, 338). Moral economies are not simply a question of values. If they were, Thompson charges, "we will be turning up moral economies everywhere" (1993, 339). Moral economies involve a class negotiation, a "social dialectic of unequal mutuality", where specific moral claims are used by weaker classes to impose moral obligations on ruling classes (1993, 344). Moral economies are not simply any type of resistance to capitalism, but imply struggles over access to the means of subsistence, with a particular focus on how marketization denies universal access to life goods, like food. The moral economy that Thompson identified was not a historical accident, but emerged at a critical moment of paradigmatic transition – a transition from subsistence and local provisioning, towards free-markets, fluid movement of commodities, and controlling structures of laissez-faire governance (Arnold 2000, 141; Smith 1997, 342).

The moral economy is not simply a materialist demand for food or a question of caloric deprivation. As many historians and peasant scholars have noted, hungry people aren't necessarily revolutionaries. The food riots of 18th century Britain involved a struggle over hegemony, whereby the marginalized seized the rhetorical power that comes with being at the sharp end of the capitalist stick in a changing social system. E. P. Thompson's insight was to emphasize the importance of subjective perceptions of social justice, rights, obligations, and reciprocity. These were cultural anachronisms, or holdovers from community modes of regulation in European medieval culture, but evolved into more progressive forms of rights discourse. Food riots occurred not simply because of hunger, but because of the survival of an ethos asserting a right to subsistence, an ethos based on a moral sense that elites had certain responsibilities to maintain the lives of those in their charge. While paternalistic in its origins in medieval Europe, the concept of moral economy implies a process of hegemonic negotiation, and the possibility of asserting broader rights and obligations. Rule is not simply "imposed", but is "articulated in the everyday intercourse of a community" (Thompson 1993, 345). Enclosure then and today, is therefore not simply a physical phenomenon. A moral enclosure occurs when the modern discourses of commodification, control and instrumental rationality come to dominate, at the same time moral economies emerge to resist "modernity's tendency to impose change, centralize power, and marginalize alternatives" (Smith 1997, 342).

While Thompson used the concept of moral economy in specific relation to English food riots, it has also been applied to peasant defences of the means of subsistence (e.g. land), most notably by James Scott in his study of peasants in Vietnam and lower Burma (1976; 1985). Here moral economies are located in peasant resistance to the imposition of market logic, where "the moral economy is summoned into being in resistance to the economy of the "free market"

(Thompson 1993, 340). While E. P. Thompson suspected that extending the idea of a "moral economy" beyond specific historical landscapes produced "amorphous results" (1993, 338), he also relinquished his hold of the concept:

> ..if I did father the term "moral economy" upon current academic discourse, the term has long forgotten its paternity. I will not disown it, but it has come of age and I am no longer answerable for its actions. It will be interesting to see how it goes on (1993, 351).

While Thompson advocated comparative inquiry into the "moral" dimension of various moral economies, it is important to resist the urge to expand the meaning of the term to apply to any and every 'moral' protest against global capitalism. Still, certain specific connections can be delineated, and certain points of connection identified between the capitalist enclosure of 18th century England and current waves of global capitalist enclosure (see Smith 1997). The elements of moral economy that make these connections particularly compelling are resistance to a paradigm of commodification and control that denies access to the means of subsistence, and the concomitant moral protest that accompanies threats to social and biological survival of the human species. While E.P. Thompson identified moral economies connected to the scarcity of fundamentals like food, today's moral economies emerge as the very existence of human life on the planet is threatened[2], and the last non-commodified realms are pulled into the marketplace.[3] The contemporary moral economy represents a kind of primordial defence against capitalist enclosure – speaking out to defend life against money, to defend community modes of regulation against market regulation, to defend moral and aesthetic rationality against the colonizing effects of instrumental reason and science. While it has become a hackneyed slogan, the future of human species on the planet is at stake.

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[2] A report by the United National Environmental Program argues that the next thirty years will be critical for human beings on the planet, and that drastic changes must be made to avoid a massive loss of life due to problems of soil erosion, water shortages,

While resistance impulses have disparate forms and agendas, the ecological exhaustion of the social and natural substratum creates a survival motive that subsumes (but does not dissolve) their differences (van der Pijl 1998). Today's moral economy implies a common sense that depends on a sense of *commons*, a place-based notion of life as inextricably embedded in a larger biological life-host with certain physical limits. This moral reaction is activated as these limits are broached, and the exhaustion of capitalist accumulation and its structures of legitimacy gives rise to counter-hegemonic impulses. The potential for moral protest remains particularly high in locations where capitalist rationalities have only recently advanced. As Scott writes:

> There is frequently a temporal gap between the brusque advances of capitalist production relations and the ideological work designed to euphemise and naturalise them. It is especially in this temporal gap, when

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global climate change, loss of coastal and marine resources, deforestation, and massive extinction (2002).

[3] An estimated 2 billion peasants will be disenfranchised from the land if neo-liberal reforms are carried out in their entirety (Arrighi 2000).

> economic practice is at variance with received values, that subordinate groups frequently have the rhetorical resources and sense of injustice that foster indignation and resistance (2000, 206).

The moral economy of protest is more obvious in the case of peasant mobilization (e.g. Zapatista protests against the enclosure of the *milpa* system of subsistence corn production), or in other instances where people live in an intimate relationship to landscape – fisherman facing depleted stocks, farmers battling soil salinisation and erosion, or forest peoples facing their extinction alongside deforestation (see Davis 2002). Yet this moral economy can also be found in advanced capitalist contexts where actors attempt to preserve, or recapture access to the commons.[4] This often involves resistance to an economy of proxy – a "total economy" where distant corporate entities are given complete responsibility to produce our clothes, feed our families, purify our water, care for our children and the elderly, prepare our dead for burial, and entertain us all the while (Berry 2000, 36). Alternative means of life and provisioning – barter, urban gardening, a thirty-two hour work week, or renewed interested in handicrafts – may not have the explicit motive to overthrow the capitalist system, but they suggest possibilities for resistance to the enclosure of a total economy.

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[4] A recent court case in Canada, for example, resists the commodification of life by challenging Harvard's patent on the "onco-mouse", a mouse specifically designed to get cancer, based on the argument that it is immoral to commodify and claim credit for a living entity, reducing it to the status of an "industrial product" (Kirk Makin, "Mouse patent bad omen for humans, judges told", Globe & Mail A5 05/22/02).

Clearly, a certain amount of resistance to global capitalism is limited to brand bashing – throwing rocks at a local Starbucks, or downloading perverse images of Ronald McDonald off the Internet. While brand-bashing can prove to be a 'gateway drug' into the realm of anti-corporate critique (Klein 2000), this type of resistance remain amenable to buy offs, cooptation, and incorporation back into commodification cycles (Frank 1997). Not only are the social and economic consequences of de-branding often miniscule, but the slogans of resistance can be easily picked up and brought back into the branding cycle. Naomi Klein gives the keynote address to the Marketing Association of Canada, while a new brand entitled 'no logo' makes an appearance. Nike produces a shirt that shows the popular cartoon character Calvin urinating on its own swoosh. Sony comes out with a violent videogame featuring anti-globalisation protestors waging street battles with police. The limits of brand bashing explain why Klein is now calling for a fusion between these two "activist solitudes": activism against a corporate driven global trading system, on the one hand, and local struggles for economic, cultural, and political autonomy on the other. In her words:

> What is now the anti-globalisation movement must turn into thousands of local movements, fighting the way neoliberal politics are playing out on the ground: homelessness, wage stagnation, rent escalation, police violence, prison explosion, criminalization of migrant workers, and so on. . . At the same time, the local movements fighting privatisation and deregulation on the ground need to link their campaigns into one large global movement, which can show where their particular issues fit into an

> international economic agenda being enforced around the world. If that connection isn't made, people will continue to be demoralized. What we need is to formulate a political framework that can both take on corporate power and control, and empower local organizing and self-determination (2001, 89).

How to make such connections is far from clear, but Klein makes no excuses for her lack of a blueprint, stating: "[w]e need to have some trust in people's ability to rule themselves, to make the decisions that are best for them" (2001, 89). This call for humility is a refreshing change from the usually arrogance of globalisation scholarship, but it is possible to go further than a 'live and let live' approach. There are certain signposts, some of which this dissertation has addressed, that help fill out our cognitive maps of a paradigmatic shift away from neo-liberal globalism. I have identified resistance to capitalist commodification, and a renewed committed to advancing a sustainable, democratic, and aesthetically pleasing life outside market systems as critical signposts. Local exchange trading systems, for instance, develop modes of exchange and local provisioning through a barter system that privileges sustainable local production. Fair-trade systems accept the principle of market exchange, but subordinate the market's regulatory power to a greater moral good of social justice for impoverished producers. Environmental justice movements defend the ecological integrity of a specific piece of land, drawing connections between absentee corporate landlords, local livelihoods and living places. These examples are not put forward as a totalising solution to global injustice, and are admittedly fragmentary. While a paradigmatic major shift in values may be desired by many, what is often lacking is a way to implement these values. And practice is critical, as Wendell Berry writes:

> …a proper concern for nature and our use of nature must be practiced not by our proxy holders [public experts, politicians, corporate executives] but by ourselves. A change of heart or of values without a change of practice is only another pointless luxury of a passively consumptive way of life (2001, 16).

While signs of praxis remain discouraging, Ray and Anderson's values research (2000) identifies the presence of a remarkable potential for change in the shifting American psyche. Their extensive survey research identifies the emergence of a subculture that is numerous, radical, and willing to embrace ecological change. This subculture, which they call the "cultural creatives", grew out of the counter-cultural movements of the 1960s, and currently makes up an estimated fifty million people in the United States. According to the research, the cultural creatives think in ways that are remarkably similar to the paradigm shifts sketched out in this dissertation. They typically reject materialism as a way of life. They are ecologically oriented and want to live within the earth's means (2000, 11). They have a distinct cognitive style; they take a wide synoptic view of the "big picture", while remaining rooted in personal narrative (2000, 8-9). This group is critical of big institutions – both governments, and corporations – and are remarkably un-cynical about politics (2000, 17, 28). They yearn to participate in meaningful democratic processes, and frequently do so at a small scale (2000, 116). Demographically, this group is rather unremarkable – it is found in all different income categories, religious groups, areas of the country, and age groupings (2000, 22-23). In fact, the only demographic that stands out is that more women than men belong to this category (60% women versus 40% men) (2000, 13).

What this "cultural creative" sub-grounding lacks, however, is connections (Ray & Anderson 2000, 39-40). They are isolated, and they lack self-awareness. They don't have a collective identity, or a collective image of their origins, or their future (2000, 94). For this reason, they also lack collective voting power and lobby groups like the so-called "moral majority" of American traditionalists. They form friendships, and might run into each other in the organic store, but they don't always know how to channel their values into practice. Yet the potential for social invention exists. As the Ray and Anderson write: "[t]he critical question is this: Once this grouping discovers their common values, will they work together to implement them? The stakes are high for all of us" (2000:40).

While a shift in values is not a sufficient condition for a paradigmatic shift, it remains a necessary step. It further validates the idea that within the dialectics of resistance and co-optation, counter-hegemonic forms of life are continually being born. Resistance to enclosure cannot be prescriptively imposed from upon high, nor can it be conjured up or from the safe remove of an ivory tower existence.

The academic responsibility remains to draw conceptual maps, fostering latent emancipatory potentials by connecting the dots unifying the social and ecological exhaustion emerging within and around us. With great humility, these chapters are put towards the ambitious end of providing 'snapshots' of a post-globalism paradigm.

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